

THE HANS ANDERSEN STORY BOOKS.

THE
SILENT BOOK
AND
OTHER STORIES.

BY
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS.

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The Silent Book.

CLOSE by the forest-path stood a lonely farm-house; the road ran right through the farm-yard. Every window in the house was open; within all was bustle and confusion; without, the sun shone full on an open coffin, which had been carried out into

the yard and placed under the deep shadow of a flowering elder tree. The dead man in the coffin was to be buried that very morning; no one shed a tear for him; his head, covered by a white cloth, rested on a large thick book, in which every leaf was made of blotting paper, and between each lay a withered flower; the book was a herbal, filled with specimens collected from different places, and it was to go down into the grave with its master. A chapter of the dead man's life was opened by each flower, and he had begged not to be separated from the book which held them.

"Who is the dead man?" we asked. "The old student," was the answer. "He was a smart lad once, they say: could read ancient tongues, sing, and write verses of his own making; but all on a sudden something made him turn all his thoughts to drinking brandy, and when his health was quite broken down, he came here into the country, and a friend paid for his board and lodging. He was as quiet as a child when he was not out of his sober senses; but when the savage mood came over him, he was really dangerous, and would run out into the forest like a madman. When we caught him and brought him here, we managed to

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put this old book in his way, and he would open it, and sit for days together looking first at one plant and then at another, while the tears rolled slowly down his cheeks. Heaven only knows what he was thinking of, but he begged to have the book laid in his coffin, and now there he lies, and in a few minutes the lid will be screwed down, and he will rest quietly in his grave."

They lifted the cerecloth, and a sunbeam fell across the quiet face; a swallow darted under the leaves of the elder tree, paused, and circled round the dead man's head.

How sad and strange it is—we all know the feeling—to look through old letters, written or received long years ago! A new life rises up before us again, with all its hopes and fears. How many people who were then so much to us are dead to us now! They are alive still, but we have not thought of them for years, though once we fancied we should cling to them for ever, and share with them all joy and sorrow.

The withered oak-leaf in the book recalls the friend of school and college days; he placed it in the student's cap as they stood under the forest boughs, and swore a life-long friendship. Where is he now? The leaf is preserved, but

the friendship lost for ever. Here is a foreign exotic, too fragile for this northern clime; the leaves still hold a ghost-like fragrance. *She* gave him that—the high-born girl in the castle gardens. Here is a rose he gathered himself, and wetted with salt tears. And here lies a nettle—what can that have to say? What were the man's thoughts as he gathered it? what as he preserved it? There is a spray of may from the forest solitudes; here an evergreen from the flower pot of the tap-room window sill, and here a bare grass blade.

The blooming elder bends slowly and tenderly over the dead man's face; the swallow circles round him—"Tweet, tweet!"

Now come the men with nails and hammer; the lid is placed upon the coffin; the head rests peacefully upon the silent book; the life story is closed for this world.

The Red Shoes.

THERE was once a pretty, delicate-looking little girl, who was so poor that all the summer through she was obliged to go barefoot, and even in the winter she

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had nothing but a pair of thick, wooden shoes, that made her little ankles red and painful.

In the same village there lived an old shoemaker's wife, and she cut out a pair of shoes from a piece of old, red cloth. These she sewed together, and sent as a present to Karen—that was the little girl's name. They were clumsy shoes, but the gift was kindly meant.

Now the red shoes reached Karen on the very day that her mother died, and she put them on then for the first time. They certainly did not look much like mourning, but she wore them all the same, and walked in them behind the poor, mean coffin.

Just at the moment a large, old-fashioned carriage rolled by, and the kind old lady who was sitting inside felt sorry for the poor little orphan, and said to the clergyman, "If you will give that little girl to me, I will take charge of her, and bring her up."

Now Karen fancied that her good fortune was entirely owing to the red shoes, while in reality the old lady thought they were such ugly things that she had them burnt. But Karen herself was neatly and simply dressed; she learned to read and to sew, and people said

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she was nice-looking, but the looking-glass said, "You are beautiful."

One summer the queen of the country passed through the town where Karen lived, and brought with her the young princess, her daughter. All the people went in crowds to see them, and Karen was among the crowd; the little princess was brought to the window to be looked at. She wore a simple white dress, with neither train nor golden crown; but she had on a pair of beautiful red morocco slippers, much prettier than those which the old cobbler's wife had made for Karen. Nothing in the world can be compared with red shoes.

The time came soon for Karen to be confirmed. A new dress was made for her, and she was to have new shoes. The first shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot; he measured it in his own room, where there stood large glass cases of elegant slippers and polished boots. They looked charming, but the old lady, who had not very good sight, did not notice them much. Among the slippers was a pair of red morocco ones, like those which the princess had worn; the shoemaker said they had been ordered for a count's daughter, but they did not fit.

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"Those are patent leather, are they not?" said the old lady; "they shine so."

"Yes, they do shine," said Karen. They fitted exactly, and were bought, but the old lady had no idea that they were red, or she would never have allowed Karen to wear them at her confirmation. But she did wear them.

Every one looked at her feet. When she entered the churchyard, the stone figure on the tombstones, and the portraits of the pastors and their wives, with stiff ruffles or long, black gowns, looked frowningly at her red shoes. Karen thought of nothing else, not when she knelt before God's altar; not when the priest spoke of her baptism vows; not when the hands of the bishop were laid upon her head in blessing. The organ pealed out solemnly, the lovely children's voices soared aloft, as the precentor led their chant, but Karen thought of nothing but the red shoes.

The next day the old lady was told by every one that Karen had worn red shoes, and she said it was a wicked thing to have done, and that in future Karen should never wear any but black shoes in church, even when she was grown up.

On the following Sunday Karen was to make

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her first Communion ; she looked at the black shoes, then at the red, and, after a moment's pause, put on the red ones.

It was a glorious summer day; Karen and the old lady walked down the footpath, through the cornfields, where it was rather dusty. By the church door stood an old soldier, leaning on his crutch ; his beard was of a strange reddish colour, and he bowed almost to the ground as the old lady approached. " Shall I dust your shoes ? " he said. Karen held out her slender little foot. " What beautiful dancing shoes ! " cried the old soldier. " Sit fast when you dance," he added, striking them smartly on the soles. The old lady gave the soldier some money, and went with Karen into the church.

Once more all the congregation looked at Karen's shoes ; and, alas ! the thought of them haunted the child's heart all the service through, so that she could not sing one psalm, nor utter one prayer.

The people came out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen lifted up her foot to follow, when the old soldier cried out, " Oh, what beautiful dancing shoes ! " She could not help making a few dancing steps, and when once she had begun, her feet

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went on of themselves; she could not stop them; it seemed as if the shoes had gained the mastery over her. She danced on round the churchyard. The coachman was obliged to run after her, seize her, and lift her into the carriage, and even then her feet kept on dancing, so that the old lady received many a kick. At last they pulled her shoes off, and then her feet could rest. The shoes were put up in a drawer, but Karen could not help going to look at them.

After a while the old lady was stricken down with illness, and it was said that she would never recover. She required constant care and attention, and who should have shown them to her if not Karen? But there was a grand ball to be held in the town that night, and Karen was invited. She looked at the red shoes, and thought it would be no harm,—she put them on—who was there to blame her?—and then she went to the ball, and began to dance. But when she wanted to go to the right, the shoes danced to the left; and when she tried to dance forward, the shoes carried her backward, on to the door, down the stairs, along the street, through the town gates, out into the dark wood.

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A red light shone through the trees; she thought it was the moon, but it was the old soldier with his red beard. He nodded to her, and cried out, "Oh, what beautiful dancing shoes!"

Then she was frightened, and tried to take off the red shoes, but they stuck fast to her feet. She tore down her stockings, but it was all in vain. She was forced on, dancing merrily over meadow and field, in rain and sunshine, by day and night—oh, in the nights it was the most terrible!

She danced across the open churchyard, but the dead do not dance; they have something better to do. She tried to rest a moment on the pauper's grave, where the coarse ferns grew, but there was no rest for her. And as she danced by the church porch, she saw an angel standing there in a long, white robe; white wings fell from his shoulders to his feet, his face was stern and awful, and in his hand he held a gleaming sword.

"Dance on," he cried—"dance with thy red shoes till thou art cold in death; till thy flesh has shrunk to a bare skeleton. Dance on from door to door, and where the children are vain and insolent, knock at their door that they may fear. Dance on till——"

"Mercy!" cried Karen, but she could not hear the angel's answer, for the shoes carried her across the plain, over stick and stone, dancing, dancing on.

One day she danced by the door of a house which she knew well; the sounds of a funeral psalm came from within, a coffin strewn with flowers was carried out; it was the coffin of her old mistress, and at the sight Karen felt that she was indeed forsaken of men, and condemned by God's angel.

On she danced into the gloomy night; the shoes forced her through brier and marsh; her feet were torn and bleeding as they crossed the desolate heath, and neared a lonely hut. It was the dwelling of the public executioner, and Karen tapped at the window panes.

"Come out; come out," she cried. "I cannot come in, for I must dance."

"You do not know who I am," answered the executioner. "It is I who strike off the heads of wicked men, and I see my axe is quivering now."

"Come out," cried Karen; "do not strike off my head, or I cannot repent me of my sin; but strike off my feet with the red shoes."

Then she confessed all her sin, and the

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executioner struck off her feet with the red shoes—on they danced, the little feet, over the heath, and into the dark wood. The man made her a pair of wooden feet, with crutches, and taught her the psalm which the penitents sing; and Karen kissed the hand that held the axe and limped away over the heath.

“Now I have suffered enough,” she said, “I will go into the church that the people may see me;” but as she hurried to the church door, the red shoes danced in front of her and frightened her away.

All the week through she wept and was sorrowful, but on Sunday she said, “Now I have striven and suffered enough. I think I am as good as many of the people who sit so proudly in their pews.” And she went boldly forward, but she could get no farther than the churchyard gate, for there were the red shoes, and she shrank back in horror, and confessed her sin from her heart.

She went to the parsonage house and begged to be taken on as a servant; she promised to be diligent and to do all she could; she asked for no wages, but only for a quiet home among people who would help her to be good. They had compassion on her and let her come; she

was now a silent, hardworking girl; she listened attentively when the clergyman read the Bible of an evening; the children were all very fond of her, but when they spoke of beauty, and dress, and finery, she shook her head.

The next Sunday they went to church and asked Karen if she would come too, but she pointed to her crutches with tears in her eyes. So all the others went out to hear God's word, but she was left alone in her little room, which was only just large enough to hold a bed and a chair. There she knelt down and opened her prayer-book, and as she read with an earnest heart the wind brought in the sound of the organ from the church, and Karen lifted up her tearful face and said, "God help me!"

Then before her in the brilliant sunshine stood God's angel; the same who had stood at the church door in his long white robes. This time he bore no gleaming sword, but a spray of roses, and when he touched the ceiling with the flowers it rose high out of sight, and in its place shone a golden star. He touched the walls; they widened into space, and Karen saw the pealing organ, and the pictures on the church walls, and the people singing psalms before the altar. The church itself had come

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to the poor girl, or she had gone to it. She was sitting in the clergyman's pew, and at the end of the psalm the children looked up and whispered, "It was right for you to come, Karen."

"It was mercy," she said.

The organ sounded, and the children's voices in the choir rose clear and sweet. The sunlight poured through the window on to the place where Karen sat, and her heart grew so full of sunlight, peace, and joy that it broke; her soul flew on the golden rays to heaven; and there was no one there who asked about the red shoes.

The Jumpers.

THE flea, the grasshopper, and the skipjack wanted to see which of them could jump the farthest. They invited all the world and anybody else who liked to come and see the contest. They were all three first-rate jumpers.

"I will give my daughter to the one who jumps the highest," said the king, "for it would be very mean to let them jump for nothing."

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The flea came first. He had very pretty manners, and bowed to every one present. He had noble blood in his veins, and was accustomed to have to do with human beings, and that always tells.

The grasshopper came next. He was certainly of heavier build, but he had a good figure, and wore the green uniform which he had received at his birth. Besides it was said that he was connected with a very high family in Egypt, and was well thought of in that country. He had come in from the fields, and been put into a house of cards, three stories high, and built entirely of court cards with the faces turned inwards; the mansion had both door and windows, all cut out of the Queen of Hearts.

"I have such a voice," said the grasshopper, "that sixteen native crickets who have sung from their infancy, and yet have never attained to a house of cards, fretted themselves thinner than they were before, from jealousy, when they heard me sing."

Both the flea and the grasshopper made known who they were, and maintained that they were worthy to obtain the princess.

The skipjack said not a word; it was supposed that he thought the more; but as he

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was only artificial, being made of a piece of bone with a little wax at one end, it was scarcely likely that he should be a great talker. The house dog sniffed round him, and found out in a moment that he was of good family, and made out of the breast bone of a genuine goose. The old Prime Minister, who had received three medals for silence, declared that the skipjack was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and that you could tell by his bones whether we were going to have a mild or a sharp winter; and that is more than you can do even from the breast bone of the man who wrote the almanack.

"I will say nothing at present," said the old king; "I take things easily, and hope for the best."

Then the jumping began. The flea jumped so high that no one could see him, and they declared that he had never jumped at all! That was very mean.

The grasshopper jumped only half as high, but he jumped right into the king's face, and the king said that was impertinent.

The skipjack stood perfectly still, and considered; at last, people began to think he was not going to jump at all.

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"I hope he does not feel ill," said the dog, and poked him gently with his muzzle. Hop! off he was, and, with a little sideways spring, he lighted on the lap of the princess, who was sitting on a low golden stool.

Then the king said, "No one could possibly aim higher than that. The spring on to my daughter's lap was a very delicate compliment; that kind of thing requires brains, and the skipjack has shown that he has them."

So he received the princess in marriage.

"But I sprang the highest," said the flea. "Never mind! Let her have her morsel of goose bone and cobbler's wax. I sprang the highest, but in this world one must have a body as well as merit, or one cannot be seen."

Thereupon the flea enlisted in foreign service, and died abroad, so people say.

The grasshopper sat down by the ditch out of doors, and thought over the way in which things are managed here below. "Body—that's what's wanted! Body—that's what's wanted!" he remarked. And then he went on with his own melancholy song, and, listening to him, we learned the story,—but it may be all pure invention, even though you see it in print.



The Flying Trunk.

HERE was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street with silver, and perhaps a little alley into the bargain. He did not do so, however, because he had other ways of spending his money. He was such a good trader that if he spent a shilling, he always managed to get back a crown piece instead—till he died.

All this money came to his son, who led a merry life for a while. He went to a ball every night, made paper kites out of bank notes, and played at ducks and drakes with gold sovereigns instead of stones.

In such ways it is very easy for one's money to come to an end, and his money did. At last he had nothing left but four shillings, a pair of slippers, and an old dressing-gown. His friends cared nothing for him now; they could not even walk down the street in his company; but one of them, who was rather good-natured, sent him a large trunk with the words, "Pack

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up!" That was all very well, but he had nothing to pack up, so he got into the trunk himself.

Now this was a very remarkable trunk, for, as soon as the lock was pressed, it could fly. The young man closed the lock, and he was up the chimney, over the hills, and far away. He was terribly frightened at first whenever the trunk creaked, for if it had broken he would have had to turn a most prodigious somersault--only think of it! He flew on, however, till he reached the country where the Turks live. There he hid the trunk under heaps of dry leaves in a forest, and went into the city. There was no objection to his doing so, because all the Turks walk about in dressing-gown and slippers, just as he did. In the streets he met a nurse carrying a little child. "I say! ycu Turkish nurse," he said, "what is that great castle yonder, close to the town, where the windows are placed so high?"

"The sultan's daughter lives there," said the nurse; "it has been prophesied that she will be very unhappy in her choice of a lover, so that no one is allowed to see her, except when the sultan and sultana are present."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son.

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Then he walked back to the wood, got inside the trunk, flew on to the roof of the castle, and crept through the window into the princess's room.

She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she looked so pretty that the merchant's son was obliged to kiss her. The princess woke immediately and was terribly frightened, till her visitor told her that he was the god of the Turks who had flown down through the air to come to her; and then, of course, she was highly delighted.

They sat down side by side, and he told her stories about her eyes, calling them dark, lovely lakes in which the thoughts swam to and fro like mermaids; and then he spoke of her forehead, and said it was a mountain of snow, white and radiant. He told very pretty stories; and then he proposed to the princess, who said yes in a moment.

"You must be sure and come on Saturday, when the sultan and sultana drink tea with me," she said. "They will be very proud of my marriage with the god of the Turks. Mind you have a pretty story ready to tell them. My mother likes something with a moral, and rather high-flown; but my father likes something that makes him laugh."

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"Very well: I shall bring no other dowry than a story," he said; and so they parted. The princess gave him a sabre studded with precious stones, and that was of great use to him, for he flew away and bought a new dressing-gown at once; after which he sat down in the wood to prepare the story: it was to be ready by Saturday, and that was no easy matter.

When it was finished, it *was* Saturday.

The sultan, the sultana, and the whole court were at tea with the princess, and received him very graciously.

"Will you relate a story?" said the sultana; "something instructive and profound."

"But amusing and laughable," said the sultan.

"Oh, certainly," he replied, and began at once. Now pay attention.

There was once a bundle of lucifer-matches who were very fond of their high origin. The founder of their family, the famous old pine tree of which each of them was a little chip, had stood for years in a mighty forest. The matches were lying between a tinder-box and an old iron pot, and were telling stories of their young days. "Yes, when we were under the greenwood tree" they cried—"and we really ~~were~~ under

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the greenwood tree—then we used to have diamond tea, or dew, as people call it, every morning and every evening. We had sunshine all day long when the sun shone; and the little birds were obliged to tell us stories. It was easy to see that we were extremely rich, because while the great majority of trees only dressed in summer, we always could afford to wear green all the year round. But when the wood-cutter—the great revolution that is—came, our family was broken up. Our ancestor received a position as mainmast on a magnificent ship which could sail all round the world if it chose to do so; the other branches were dispersed about, and we have the task of enlightening the vulgar crowd. That is the reason that people of our class are found in the kitchen.”

“My fate was differently ordered,” said the iron pot. “From the moment I came into the world I have been busy with scouring and cooking. I am thoroughly practical, and have been longest in the house. My sole relaxation is to join in rational conversation with my companions, when I have been scoured bright and clean and put in my place on the shelf after dinner. For—if I except the market-basket, who occasionally goes out into the world—we

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all live retired between these four walls. The market-basket is our only news-bringer; and he speaks in a most alarming manner of the Government and the people; indeed, I knew an aged pot who, as she was listening to him the other day, fell down in a fright and broke to pieces. He is a radical, I can tell you that much."

"You are talking too fast," said the tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint so that the sparks flew out. "Now, shall we not try and pass a pleasant evening together?"

"Yes; let us decide who is the grandest," said the matches.

"No; I do not like talking about myself," replied the pot. "Let us arrange an evening's entertainment. I will begin by telling a story founded on fact; such a one as we have all experienced: then we can easily throw ourselves into it, and receive a great deal of enjoyment from it. On the Baltic, by the Danish shore"——"What a pretty beginning!" cried all the plates: "that is the kind of story we like."

"Yes—there my youth was passed in a quiet family. The furniture was polished, the floors scoured, and clean curtains were put up every fortnight."

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"How charmingly you relate the story!" said the broom. "One can tell in a moment that one is listening to a man who has been much in female society: there is such a pure tone throughout."

"Yes, one feels that deeply," exclaimed the bucket, with a little leap of joy, which made the water splash on to the floor.

The pot continued, and the end was just as good as the beginning.

The plates rattled for joy, and the broom took up some green parsley out of the dust-hole and crowned the pot, for she knew it would vex the others. "If I crown him to-day, he will crown me to-morrow," she thought.

"Now I will dance," cried the tongs. Mercy on us! how she did stand on one leg! The old chair-cover in the corner split at the sight.

"Shall I be crowned?" asked the tongs: and crowned she was.

"These are all common people!" said the matches.

The tea-urn was then asked to sing; but she said she had a slight cold and could not sing unless she boiled. That, however, was mere affectation; the truth was, she would not sing

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unless she was in the drawing-room with the master and mistress.

In the window lay an old quill pen with which the servant used to write; there was nothing remarkable about her, except that she had been dipped too deeply in the ink, but that was just what she was proud of.

"If the urn won't sing," she cried, "she can leave it alone. There is a nightingale in a cage outside who can sing: she has never learned, it is true, but we will excuse that for this evening."

"I consider it extremely improper," said the tea-kettle—he was a kitchen singer, and half-brother to the urn—"that such a foreign bird should be heard. Is that patriotic? Let the market-basket decide!"

"I am extremely annoyed," said the market-basket. "I am more annoyed in my own mind than I can express! Is this a fitting way to spend the evening? Would it not be far more sensible to set the house to rights, and put every one in his proper place? Come! I will lead the game, and that will be quite another thing."

"Yes, let us act charades," they all cried. The door opened, and in came the servant

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girl. Not a single thing moved. All were still. But there was not a pot among them who did not feel what he could have done and how grand he was. "Yes, if I had chosen," they all thought, "we should have spent a very pleasant evening."

The servant took up the matches and began to light the fire with them. Heavens! how they fizzed and blazed!

"Any one can see now that we are the grandest," they cried. "What brilliance we shed around! What lustre!" And with that they were burnt out.

"That was a delightful story," cried the sultana. "I feel myself quite carried away into the kitchen among the matches. Yes! you shall marry our daughter."

"So you shall; you shall marry her on Monday," exclaimed the sultan; and from that time they treated the young man as one of the family.

The night before the wedding the whole city was illuminated. Gingerbread and biscuits were thrown among the people; the street-boys stood on tiptoe, cried hurrah! and whistled through their fingers. It was extremely splendid!

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"Now, I suppose I must give them some kind of a treat," said the merchant's son. Whereupon he bought a quantity of rockets, crackers, and every imaginable sort of fireworks, placed them in his trunk, and flew up in the air.

P-r-r-r-r! how they whirled, and fizzed, and blazed out on all sides!

The Turks jumped up in the air till their slippers flew past their ears; they had never seen such a glitter and show before. Now they understood clearly that their princess was going to marry a god.

As soon as the merchant's son had finished his display of fireworks, he alighted in the wood, hid the trunk, and went into the town to hear how the exhibition had gone off; it was quite natural that he should wish to know.

What things the people said to be sure! Every one whom he questioned had seen something different from his neighbours, but they all agreed it had been a very beautiful sight.

"I saw the bridegroom myself!" said one of them; "his eyes were like golden stars, and his beard like foaming water."

"He flew away in a mantle of fire," cried another; "lovely angel-faces gleamed forth from its folds."

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In short, he heard wonderful things; and the next day was his wedding day.

He hastened back to the wood to get inside the trunk—but where *was* the trunk? It was burnt up. A spark from the fireworks was left behind, the trunk had caught fire and was burnt to ashes! He could not fly any more—he could never reach his bride!

She stood waiting on the roof all day long; most likely she is waiting there now. He, meanwhile, is wandering about the world telling stories; but none of them are so amusing as the one he told about the matches.

A Story.

ALL the apple trees in the garden were in full bloom; they had made haste to cover themselves with blossom, even before the green leaves came. The ducklings waddled to and fro in the farmyard, the cat sat basking in the warmth and licked the sunshine from her paws. If you looked across the fields you saw the standing corn in its tender, delicate

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green ; the birds were twittering and warbling overhead, as if they knew it was a festival.

It was Sunday morning : the church bells were ringing, and the country folk, dressed in their best, wended their way to church with



happy faces. Everything looked its best and brightest ; it was a day so warm and blessed that one felt moved to say our Father loves to dwell among His children.

But inside the church the preacher stood in

the pulpit and spoke with harsh and angry voice. He said that all men were godless, and that therefore God would punish them: that after death the wicked would burn in hell-fire for ever.

It was terrible to hear, and he spoke of it with firm conviction: he described hell as a pestilential cavern into which flows all the corruption of the world—where there is no air to breathe but sulphurous fumes, where the wicked sink deeper and ever deeper in eternal silence. It was indeed frightful to hear him, and the people in the church were pale with horror. Outside the birds were singing joyously, the sun shone bright and warm, and every flower seemed to say, "Oh, God, Thou art good!"

Out of doors, it did not look like the preacher's sermon.

On going to rest that night the Pastor looked at his wife's sad, thoughtful face. "What ails thee?" he said to her.

"Ah, what ails me?" she cried. "I cannot collect my thoughts; I cannot grasp what you told us in church to-day, that there are so many godless men, and that they must burn in hell for ever. For ever? ah, how long

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that is! I am but a human being—a poor sinner in the sight of God, and yet I could not find it in my heart to let even the most hardened wretch suffer for ever. How, then, can He, who is infinite love, and who knows how evil attacks us from within and from without? I cannot believe it, even though you say it.”

Autumn came; the trees lost their leaves; the harsh, stern preacher sat by his wife's deathbed and watched the humble, contrite soul pass away.

“If any child of man can find rest in death and mercy before her God, thou canst,” said the preacher. He folded her hands, and read the psalms for the dead.

They bore her to her grave: a few tears rolled slowly down her husband's sunken cheeks; in the parsonage house all was silence and desolation; the light of the house was quenched—gone to the everlasting home.

It was the dead of night: a cold wind stirred the preacher's hair; he opened his eyes, and it seemed to him as if the moonlight filled his room, but the moon was not shining. A radiant form stood beside him—the spirit of his dead wife; she looked at him sorrowfully, and seemed as if she wished to speak to him.

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The preacher rose up in his bed and stretched out his arms—"No rest even for thee?" he cried; "the best and humblest!"

The figure laid her hand upon her heart and shook her head.

"And can I help you to your rest?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"How then?"

"Give me a single hair from the head of any sinner whom God will condemn to everlasting torment."

"Is your release to be obtained so easily as that?" he asked.

"Follow me!" said the spirit—"you are permitted to do so. Our way lies wherever your thoughts will lead us: invisibly we shall penetrate in the inmost recesses of men's hearts. But with unfaltering voice must you pronounce the name of him who is sentenced to eternal pain, and he must be found before the cock crowing."

Swiftly, borne by their winged thoughts, they found themselves in the great city; from the walls and houses flamed out, in letters of fire, the names of the seven deadly sins—the whole seven-hued rainbow of evil.

"Yes, within there, as I thought—as I

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knew," said the Pastor, "they dwell who shall be a prey to the eternal flame." They stood before the brilliantly-lighted mansion; the staircase was half hidden by rare flowers, from above came the sound of dance music; footmen in liveries of silk and velvet lined the entrance hall. "Our ball can vie with the king's," said one of the insolent lacqueys. His scornful glance fell on the gaping crowd in the street, and his thoughts were printed on his face. "What is this ragged crowd, in comparison to me, but dregs and scum?"

"Pride!" said the spirit; "do you not see?"

"See him?" replied the preacher. "He is but a poor ignorant fool: the eternal fires are not for him."

"Only a fool," resounded through the house of pride—it was the sentence passed on all within.

They passed on to the miser's four bare walls. Worn to a skeleton, hungry, shivering with cold, the old man cleaves, with heart and soul, to his treasure. They saw him start in feverish haste from his bed, take a loose stone out of the wall, where lay an old stocking heavy with gold; saw him feel his ragged coat where the gold coins had been sewn in, and marked how

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his damp fingers shook. "He is ill," cried the preacher. "His sin is madness—a joyless madness girt round with anguish and evil dreams."

They passed on to the cells of the criminals; who lay in long rows, sleeping side by side. Like a wild beast, one of them started from his sleep with a terrible cry—he struck out wildly at his companion, who turned in sleepy anger.

"Hold your peace, monster," he cried, "every night it is the same."

"Every night!" shrieked the other; "every night he comes to torment me. In my passion I have done this and that. Born with base and evil tendencies, I have sinned, and I suffer. One thing I have not yet confessed. When I left this place, the last time, and passed by my former master's house I thought of old wrongs till my passion flamed up within me. I struck a lucifer-match against the wall; it may have been too near the thatch. Everything was burned down. The heat scorched me—scorches me now. I myself helped to save the cattle and furniture. No living thing was burned, except a flock of pigeons who flew into the flame, and the yard dog. I had forgotten him. His howls were heard through the flame, and

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I hear them every night when I try to sleep; and if I do sleep, he comes to me in my dreams, flies at me, howls, tears and torments me. Listen, fellow, while I speak! You can snore the whole night through—there is no sleep for me!” and, with bloodshot eyes, he clenched his fist and struck his comrade in the face.

“The madman has broken out again,” cried a dozen voices; savagely the others set upon him, struck and wrestled with him, and at last secured him with thongs, tied so tightly that they drew blood.

“You are killing the unhappy creature!” exclaimed the preacher, stretching out his hand in protection over the tortured criminal, who was suffering the penalty of his sin. At the pitying gesture the scene changed. They passed swiftly through luxurious halls and wretched hovels; envy, self-worship, every mortal sin passed by them. An angel of judgment read their accusation and their defence. The defence was but a poor one, but it was read to Him who knows all—all the temptations from within and from without—Him, who is very Love. The preacher’s hand trembled; he dared not stretch it out: he ventured not to

pluck a hair from the head of any. Tears rushed from his eyes, like streams of pity and mercy, whose cooling waters quench the fires of hell.

The cock crowed.

"Merciful God!" cried the preacher, "give *Thou* peace to her spirit. I cannot set her free."

"Peace is granted to me now," said a gentle voice. "It was thy harsh words, thy despair of human kind, thy gloomy thoughts of God and His creation that brought me to thee. Learn to know thy fellow-men, and to see even in the worst of them a trace of that divine Spirit Who quenches and conquers hell."

The preacher felt a kiss upon his lips; a light shone round him; God's golden sunshine poured into the room; and his wife, living, gentle, and loving, woke him from a dream which had been sent to him by God.





The Old Street Lamp.

HAVE you ever heard the story of the old street lamp? It is not particularly amusing; but it can be listened to for all that.

There was once an honest old street lamp who had been engaged in the public service for many years, and was now about to be pensioned off. She was burning for the last time at the top of her post, and lighting up the whole street. It seemed to her that she was like an elderly ballet-dancer, dancing for the last time, and on the morrow destined to sit forgotten in her garret. That *to-morrow* woke many an anxious thought in the old lamp; for, first of all, she would have to appear for the first time at the town hall and be inspected by the mayor and corporation, that they might see whether or no she was fit for further service.

It would then be decided whether she should be transferred to a suburb to enlighten the folk who lived there, or be sent to a factory, or despatched without more delay to an iron foundry to be recast. In the latter case she

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might be made into a thousand things, but the doubt as to whether she should lose all memory of ever having been a street lamp troubled her dreadfully. Whatever might befall her, one thing seemed certain, and that was that she would be separated from the night watchman and his wife, whom she had always considered as belonging to her own family. When the lamp was first lighted in the street, the watchman had been just appointed to his office; he was an active young man then. Yes! that was many years ago since he became a watchman and she a street lamp. His wife was rather high at first, she would not vouchsafe to cast a glance on the lamp except at night—never in the daytime! But latterly, when they were all three growing old together, she had attended to the lamp herself, rubbing and polishing and pouring in the oil. The two old people were thoroughly honest: they had never cheated the lamp out of a drop of her oil.

This was her last evening in the street, and to-morrow she was to appear at the town hall. These were two gloomy thoughts. No wonder that she did not shine very bright. Many other thoughts, too, passed through her mind. She had lent her light to many people, and seen

many things; perhaps she had seen as much as the mayor and corporation. But she did not say this aloud, for she was a well-disposed, good sort of a lamp, and would not say a disparaging word against any one—certainly not against the Government. She was full of thoughts, and her flame flickered uneasily. At such moments she imagined that she could not be quite forgotten. For instance, there was that handsome young man—a long time ago that was, certainly—he held in his hand a note written on pink paper with gilt edges; the writing was written in a delicate lady's hand. He read it twice, kissed it, and looked up to the lamp with eyes that plainly said, "I am the happiest man in the world!" Only he and the lamp knew what was written in this first letter from his lady-love. Yes; and the lamp remembered another pair of eyes. It is really wonderful how one's thoughts dart from one thing to another! A funeral was passing down the street, a beautiful young face was resting on the flower-bestrewn bier; rows of lighted tapers made the lamp's flame look dim. Crowds of people formed in procession on the pavement and slowly followed the coffin: but when the shine of the torches had passed away

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from the dazzled lamp, one man was left behind, leaning against the post, bitterly weeping. These, and such-like memories haunted the old lamp as she shone for the last time.

The sentry relieved from duty knows at least who his successor will be, and can whisper to him a few words of useful information: the old street lamp knew nothing of hers, and yet she could have given him most valuable hints as to the fog and rain, telling him, for instance, how far the moonlight came along the pavement, which side the wind generally blew from, and similar particulars.

Meanwhile three persons who were lying in the gutter were each wishing to represent the old lamp, who, as they knew, would soon be obliged to retire. The first was a herring's head which could shine in the darkness, after a fashion; and thought it would be a great saving of oil if he were placed on the lamp-post. Number two was a piece of rotten wood, which could also shine a little, and considered itself to be descended from one of the monarchs of the forest. Number three was a glow-worm; the lamp could not make out how it had got there, but there it was, and it too could shine. The rotten wood and the herring's head swore, by all that was

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holy, that it could only shine at certain times, and therefore was quite out of the running.

The old lamp said that neither of them gave sufficient light to fill the office of street-lamp: but they did not believe her. As soon as they understood that the situation was not in the gift of the lamp herself, they thought that explained all; she was too infirm to be entrusted with the appointment.

Just at that moment the wind came up round the street corner and blew through the ventilators of the old lamp. "What do I hear?" it cried. "You are going away to-morrow? This is the last time we shall meet? Then I must give you a parting gift. I will blow into the chambers of your brain so that you shall not only retain the memory of past words and scenes, but that all shall be so clear within you that you shall be able to see all you hear read or talked of in your presence."

"Oh, that is a splendid gift!" cried the old lamp. "I thank you from my heart. So that I am not recast, I do not mind. Shall I retain my memory even in that case?"

"My dear old lamp, be reasonable," said the wind, with a puff.

As he spoke the moon appeared from behind

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a cloud. "What are you going to give to the lamp?" said the wind.

"Nothing," said the moon; "I am on the wane, and the street lamps have never enlightened me—quite the contrary." And with these words the moon disappeared again immediately, so as to be relieved from further importunities.

Suddenly a drop fell on the lamp from the grey cloud overhead. "The cloud has sent me as a present," said the drop; "perhaps you will one day think me the most valuable of all. I shall penetrate your whole frame, so that at any moment when you wish it you may be eaten up with rust, and fall into ashes."

The lamp did not think that was a nice present, and the wind was of her opinion too. "Will no one give anything else?" he blew as loud as he could.

A shooting-star dashed past them, leaving behind a momentary line of fire.

"What was that?" cried the herring's head. "Was it not a shooting-star? I verily believe it shot right into the lamp! Certainly, if people of such a position as that care to apply for the place, we may as well say good-night and go home."

So they all three went home. But the old

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lamp shed round a beautiful golden light. "That was a glorious present," she said. "The dear, lovely stars, who have always been my greatest joy, and who shine as I can never shine, though I strive and try after it always, have thought of the old lamp, and sent a present which gives me the power of bringing before me all that I have seen, or that I hear, but of being seen by all I love. And that is true happiness, for what is joy which one cannot share with others?"

"The remark does honour to your disposition," cried the wind. "But for that, wax tapers are necessary. If wax tapers are not lighted within you, your rare gifts will not profit other people. The stars never thought of that; they take you and every kind of light for wax tapers. But I will go down now." And he went down.

"Wax tapers, indeed!" cried the old lamp. "Never have I had such things, and I fear I never shall have as long as I live——If only I can escape being recast!"

The next day—well, we had better pass over the next day! The next night the street lamp rested in an old high-backed arm-chair. And guess where? Why, at the old night watchman's! He had begged, as a favour from the Corporation, that, in consideration of his

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long and faithful services, they would allow him to keep the lamp which he had put up four-and-twenty years ago, on his first day of office as a watchman. He looked upon it as his child; he had no other: and the lamp was made over to him.

There she lay in the old chair by the stove; it seemed as if she had grown bigger, for she filled up the whole chair.

The old couple sat at supper, and cast many a kindly glance at the street lamp; they would not have grudged her a place at table.

Their room was certainly an underground one; you were obliged to go down some stone steps to reach it, but when once you were inside everything looked warm and comfortable. Bands of list were nailed on the door to keep out the draught; everything was clean and neat; white curtains hung round the bed and before the window. On the window sill stood two curious flower-pots which neighbour Christian, the sailor, had brought from the East or West Indies. They were made of clay, and were in the shape of elephants, only they had no backs, so that they could be filled with earth. One was planted with garlic, that was the kitchen garden: out of the other grew a

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pretty geranium tree, that was the flower garden. Against the wall hung a coloured print of the Congress of Vienna. There you had all the emperors and kings together. Near to that a clock, with heavy leaden weights, went "tic-tac," and it was always fast; that was much better, the old people used to say, than if it had been slow. They sat eating their supper; and the old lamp lay, as I have already mentioned, in the arm chair close to the stove. It seemed to her that the whole world was upside down. But when the old watchman looked at her, and talked over all they had gone through together in rain and mist, in clear, short summer nights, and in the long winter darkness, amid the whirling snow, so that one longed for the warm room—then the old lamp felt as if the world had come right again. She saw it all as clearly as if it were happening at the moment: the wind had given her a famous light.

The two old folks were very active and industrious; not an hour was wasted. On Sunday afternoons, a book of some kind, generally a book of travels, was brought out, and the old man would read aloud. He read of the vast African forests where the wild elephants

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wander at will: his wife listened eagerly and cast furtive glances at the two elephants which did duty for flower pots. "I can almost picture it to myself," said the old woman: and the street-lamp wished with all her heart that they would put a wax taper within her, for then the old woman would have been able to see it all, even the very smallest details, as the lamp herself saw it:—the tall trees with their interlacing branches, the naked savages on horse-back, and the troops of elephants treading down the jungle with their broad, heavy feet.

"What is the use of all my powers without a wax-light?" cried the street lamp; "there is only oil and tallow here, and they are of no use."

One day a whole heap of wax-taper ends made their way into the little room; the larger pieces were burnt, and the smaller were used by the old woman to wind her thread upon. So there were wax lights in plenty, but it never occurred to any one to put a piece in the old lamp.

"Here I am with my rare gifts," said the street-lamp. "I see it all in my own mind, and yet I can impart nothing to others; they know not that I can transform the white walls

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into rich tapestries, or mighty forests, or anything else that they can desire." The lamp was always kept neat and clean, and set up in a corner where all the world could see her. Strangers said it was nothing but old lumber; but the old folk did not mind about that, they liked the old lamp.

One day—it was the watchman's birthday—the old woman stood over the lamp smiling softly to herself. "I shall light up in honour of my old man to-night," she said. And the lamp rattled her lead-rimmed squares, for she said, "Now at last I shall have a light!" But it was only oil after all—no wax-light was even thought of. She burned the whole evening through, but she saw only too well that the gift of the shooting-star would be useless for this life. Then she had a dream; now it was nothing wonderful for one of her capabilities to be able to dream. It seemed to her that the two old people were dead, and that she herself had been sent to the iron-foundry to be recast. She was just as frightened and uneasy as when she stood before the Mayor and Corporation in the Town Hall. But although she had the power of crumbling into ashes, she did not use it. She was thrown into the

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smelting furnace, and recast as a candelabra, as beautiful as one could imagine, and made just on purpose to hold wax-tapers. It was in the shape of an angel, holding a bouquet, and the wax-lights stood in the centre of the bouquet. The candelabra was placed on a green writing table ; the room was very beautiful, books lay all around, the walls were hung with splendid pictures, it was the room of a poet. Everything of which he wrote was imaged around him ; the scene changed into gloomy woods, or sunny meadows where the stork wandered to and fro ; to the deck of a ship on the restless sea, or the clear heavens with its myriad stars.

“What capacities lie hidden within me,” cried the old street-lamp, as she awoke. “I could almost wish to be recast ! But no ; that must not happen so long as the old folks are living : they love me for myself as I am ; they have kept me clean and filled with oil. I am as well cared for as the whole congress yonder, and they are fond of that, too.”

From that time the good old lamp enjoyed more inward peace, as she richly deserved to do.



The Metal Pig.

IN the city of Florence, not far from the Piazza del Granduca, is a little by-lane called, I think, Porta Rosa. There, before a kind of vegetable market, stands an artistically formed metal pig. Fresh, clean water flows from its mouth; it has become of a greenish-black colour from sheer old age, but the snout still shines as if it were polished daily, as indeed it is by hundreds of children and lazzaroni, who seize it with their hands, and place their mouths close to the metal, so that they can drink from it. It is a perfect picture to see the animal bestridden by a handsome half-naked lad, who lays his fresh lips close to the brazen snout.

Any one who visits Florence can easily find the place; he has but to ask the first beggar he meets for the metal pig.

It was late on a winter's night; the mountains were covered with snow, but the moon was shining: and the Italian moonlight gives as bright a light as the light of our dim northern

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winter day—nay, better, for there the air cheers and revives us, while in the north the cold, grey, leaden clouds press us down to earth, to the cold, wet earth which soon shall press down our coffin-lid.

In the grand duke's castle gardens, under an arched roof of pines, where a thousand roses blossom all the winter through, a little, ragged boy had been sitting the whole day long; a boy who might have sat for a picture of Italy herself—fair, smiling, and yet suffering.

He was hungry and thirsty, but no one gave him either food or drink; and when the hour came for closing the gardens, the gate-keeper drove him out. He stood for a long while, dreaming idly on the bridge, and watching the golden stars which glimmered in the Arno beneath, as it flowed on towards the splendid marble bridge Della Trinità.

He wended his way to the metal pig, knelt down, wound his arms round the rugged neck, placed his lips to the polished snout, and drank the water in long draughts. Close at hand lay a few lettuce leaves, and one or two chestnuts, and that was the child's supper. No one else was in the street, it belonged to him alone, and he climbed on to the back of the pig, bent

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forward till his curly head rested on the creature's neck, and before he was conscious of fatigue, he was sound asleep.

At midnight the metal pig stirred; he heard it say distinctly, "Hold fast, little boy, I am going to run;" and off it went with him, a



wonderful ride. First of all they made for the Piazza del Granduca, and the bronze horse, which carries the duke's statue, neighed aloud, the painted coat of arms on the court of justice shone like living pictures, Michael Angelo's David swung his deadly sling, a strange life stirred on every side. The groups of Perseus,

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and the Sabines started to sudden consciousness, a cry of anguish broke from the women's lips and echoed far and wide across the square.

In the Colonnade before the Palazzo degli Uffizzi, where the nobles keep high carnival, the metal pig stood still.

"Hold fast," said the pig, "hold fast. I am going upstairs now." The child did not speak, he was trembling, half in terror, half in joy.

They passed through a long gallery; the boy had often been here before; the walls were hidden by splendid paintings; statues and busts stood all around, and the light was as clear as in the brightest noon-day. It was most beautiful of all when a side door opened; the child remembered that also, but now all the beauty was seen in its fairest light. Here stood a lovely, marble woman, beautiful as only the great master of marble could mould: her fair limbs moved, dolphins flocked to her feet, immortality shone from her clear eyes. The world knows her as the Medicean Venus. By her side stood marble figures, where the soul has thrilled through the stone—handsome, naked men, one of whom is whetting his sword, gladiators wrestling in deadly combat; the sword

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was whetted, the battle fought for the goddess of beauty.

The child was dazzled by the splendour; the walls glowed with colour, all was life and movement. The statue of Venus seemed doubled—the earthly Venus rose, yielding and passionate as when Titian clasped her to his heart; it was wonderful to see. They were two fair women, their lovely, unveiled limbs were stretched on soft cushions, their breasts heaved, their heads moved so that the heavy masses of hair fell over their low shoulders, while their dark eyes spoke out the thoughts of their beating hearts. None of the pictures dared to come quite out of the frames; the goddess of beauty herself, the gladiators and the sword-whetter remained in their places; for the glory which streamed down from the pictures of the Virgin and the saints held them spell-bound.

What lustre and beauty met them in every room! The child saw it all: the metal pig walked slowly through the ever-changing loveliness. One sight drove out another; but at last came a picture which printed itself deeply in the child's heart, and chiefly because of the happy children's faces on it. He had seen it

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once by daylight—many pass it heedlessly by, and yet it contains a whole treasure of poesy. It is the descent of Christ into hell—they are not the condemned who throng around him, but groups of heathen. The Florentine Angelo Bronzino has painted the picture. The loveliest thing in the picture is the expression of the children's faces; the full confidence that they shall be taken to heaven. Two of them embrace each other already—one little lad stretches out his hand to another and points to himself, as if to say, "I am going to heaven!" The elder folk stand in uncertain hope, or bow themselves in humble adoration before the Lord Jesus. The glance of the child rested longest of all on this picture, the metal pig stood still before it; a faint sigh was heard, did it come from the animal or from the canvas? The lad stretched out his arms to the smiling children, but the pig ran away with him through the open doorway. "Thanks to thee, dear, kind pig!" said the child, as they hastily ran down the staircase.

"And thanks to thee, as well," answered the metal pig; "we have helped each other, for it is only when I have an innocent child on my back that I receive the power of running.

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See! I may even pass under the light that falls from the lamp below the picture of the Virgin—but I may not enter the church. When you are on my back, indeed, I may look in from without. Do not get off, or I shall lie dead as you see me in the Porta Rosa.”

“I will stay with you,” said the little one; and on they hurried through the streets of Florence till they came to the square before the Church of Santa Croce.

The doors opened wide, lights gleamed from the altar through the church and streamed across the lonely piazza.

A wondrous radiance gleamed from a grave in the left aisle; thousands of glancing stars shone round it like a glory. A coat-of-arms glows on the stone—a ladder on a blue ground that burns like fire—it is Galileo’s grave. The monument is simple, but the burning ladder on the blue ground is full of meaning. It speaks of art, which raises its glowing ladder to the heavens, so that its prophets are caught up, like Elijah, to the skies.

In the right aisle the columns of the rich sarcophagus seem instinct with life. Here stood Michael Angelo, yonder Dante, wearing his laurel crown, Alfieri, Macchiavelli—the

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great men who form the pride and boast of Italy.* It is a splendid church, smaller, but far lovelier than the marble cathedral.

It seemed as if the marble drapery stirred, the noble figures raised their heads and looked towards the glittering altar, where, amid soaring bursts of music, white robed boys swung their golden censers—the heavy fragrance streamed from the church out into the open square.

The boy stretched out his hand towards the glory, and in a moment the metal pig hurried him away ; he was obliged to hold firmly to its neck, the wind whistled past his ears, the church doors creaked on their hinges as they swung to, for a moment the child seemed to lose consciousness, he felt an icy chill, and opened his eyes.

It was daylight ; he sat, half falling from the

* Michael Angelo's tomb stands opposite Galileo's. On the monument three figures are grouped round his bust: Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Dante's monument is next to this, though the poet's body lies at Ravenna; on his monument Italy, as Poesy, weeps for her lost poet. A few steps farther is the tomb of Alfieri, on which are carved laurel, lyre, and masks, with Italy weeping above the coffin. The line of distinguished men is closed by Macchiavelli.

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back of the pig, which stood, where it had ever stood, in the street of Porta Rosa.

Fear and dread filled the child's heart at the thought of her whom he called his mother. She had sent him out yesterday to beg, and he had received nothing; he was hungry and thirsty. Once more he embraced the metal pig, kissed it, and nodded to it a farewell. Then, wending his way along a narrow lane, hardly wide enough to admit a donkey carrying its pack saddle, he came to an iron-bound door. A dirty staircase, with a rope for banisters, led him to an open corridor hung with rags; another staircase led him down into a courtyard, where, from a well in the centre, iron pipes were carried up to the houses, and one bucket hung by another; the chains creaked, the buckets rose and fell, the water splashed in the courtyard. Another crumbling staircase led upwards. Two Russian sailors came clattering down the steps at such a headlong rate that they almost overturned the poor lad. They were returning from their nightly bacchanal; a black-haired woman, not young, but handsome, followed them. "What have you brought?" she cried out to the child.

"Don't be angry," he pleaded—"they gave

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me nothing, nothing at all ; " and he seized his mother's dress as if to kiss it. They entered the squalid room ; I will not describe it, further than to say that in it one saw the inevitable *marito*, or chafing dish with handles, which the Italians carry about with them, to warm themselves at its charcoal embers. The woman took up the *marito*, thrust aside the boy with her elbow and said, " Come, you have brought some money."

The lad began to cry : she kicked him roughly, and he sobbed aloud.

" Be still, or I will break your noisy head ! " she cried, swinging the chafing dish ; the child threw himself on the ground, with a shrill cry of fear. His voice brought one of the neighbours into the room, a woman, holding her *marito* in her hands.

" What are you doing to the boy, Felicita ? " she cried.

" The child is mine," answered Felicita. " I can murder him if I like, and you into the bargain, Giannina." She lifted her *marito*, Giannina raised hers too, in self-defence ; the two clay dishes swung together so violently that they broke to pieces, and a shower of glowing embers, ashes, and fiery dust filled

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the room. In the confusion the child escaped from the room: he ran through the courtyard and out into the street, until he could not breathe. Before him stood the great church whose doors had opened to him on the previous night; he went in, and, kneeling on the first grave he came to—it was Michael Angelo's—he sobbed aloud. The church was gloriously beautiful: mass was being sung—people went and came, and no one noticed the child. Only one elderly man paused for a moment, glanced at him, and then went away like the others.

The child was faint from hunger: he crept into a corner between the marble monuments and fell asleep. Towards evening he was awoken by a pull at his garments, he started up, and the same old man was standing before him.

“Are you ill? Where do you live? Have you been here all day?” asked the old man. The child answered the string of questions, and the old man took him to his little house, which was in a side street near at hand. They entered into a glove-maker's workshop, where a woman sat busily sewing; a little white poodle, shorn so closely that one could see the pink colour of

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his skin, was leaping about on the table and sat up before the child in greeting.

"Innocent creatures find each other out," said the woman, caressing both dog and child.



They gave the boy food and drink, and told him he might spend the night with them, and that on the next day Guiseppe, the old glove-maker, would speak with his mother. They gave him a little bed, poor and mean indeed—but for him who had slept so often on hard,

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cold steps, it was royally splendid: he slept sweetly, dreaming of the lovely pictures and the metal pig.

Guiseppe went out the next morning; the child was sad to see him go, for he knew that the result would be that he would be taken back to his mother. He kissed the merry little dog, and nodded to them both.

What news did old Guiseppe bring back with him? He spoke for a long while with his wife, who nodded and stroked the child. "He is a lovely boy," she said; "he will make as famous a 'prentice as you did. See how pliant and delicate his fingers are! Madonna has surely destined him to be a glove-maker."

The child stayed on in the house, and the woman taught him to sew; he ate well, slept well, learned how to play, and began to tease *Bellissima*, the little dog.

Then the woman would scold and threaten him, and the child would take it to heart and sit sorrowfully in his lonely chamber. The room looked on the street where skins were hung out to dry; thick iron bars protected every window; the boy could not sleep, the metal pig was always in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard outside the house "Pit-pat." It was certainly

the pig—he sprang to the window, but it had gone by.

“Help the gentleman to carry his colour-box,” said Madame to the child, one morning, as the young painter, their neighbour, stepped by with a large roll of canvas under his arm. The boy picked up the box and followed the painter; they set out towards the gallery, and went up the stairs which were so familiar to him now, ever since his ride on the metal pig. He recognized the groups of statues, the marble Venus and her who lived in colour, he saw once more the Virgin, and Saint John.

They paused once more before Bronzino’s picture; the lovely children smiled in expectation of heaven, and the poor lad smiled back at them, for this was *his* heaven.

“Go home now,” said the painter, when the boy had stood motionless while the easel was set up.

“May I see you paint?” asked the boy. “May I look on while you put the picture on your white canvas?”

“I am not going to paint yet,” answered the man, taking up his black crayon. His hand moved quickly, his eye measured the great picture; and, although only a few fine

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strokes were visible, there stood the Christ on the canvas as He stands in the coloured picture.

"Now, go home with you," said the painter ; and the boy walked silently homeward, sat himself down at the table and learned to sew gloves.

But all day long his thoughts were in the picture gallery ; he pricked his fingers, worked clumsily, but did not tease Bellissima. When the evening closed in, and the house-door stood wide open, he stole out.

It was cold, but starlight, bright, and pleasant. He wandered through the desolate streets till he stood again before the metal pig ; he kissed it and got on to its back. "Oh, you dear pig, how I have longed for you !" he cried ; "we must have a ride together to-night !"

The metal pig stood motionless, with the clear spring flowing from its snout. The child bestrode him, and something pulled gently at his dress : he looked down, it was Bellissima, the little half-shorn Bellissima, barking as much as to say, "Look ! I am here, too. What are you sitting there for ?" No fiery dragon could have frightened the lad more than Bellissima did in that place, and at that hour. Bellissima in the open street without her wraps !

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not *dressed*, as her mistress used to say! What would become of him? 'The little dog never came out in the winter without wearing a little jacket of lambskin, cut out and made expressly for her. The jacket was prettily trimmed with bows and tiny bells, and tied on with scarlet ribbon. The dog looked like a little kid when it was allowed to trot along in this costume by its mistress's side. Bellissima out of doors and not dressed! What would not happen? All dreams and fancies were come to an end; the boy kissed the metal pig and took Bellissima under his arm; the dog was trembling with cold, so the boy ran as fast as he could.

"What are you running off with?" cried two policemen, at whom Bellissima barked. "Where have you stolen that little dog?" and they took it from him.

"Oh, give it me back!" implored the child.

"If you have not stolen it, you can tell them at home to send for it to the police-station," and away they went with Bellissima.

There was a calamity! The little one did not know whether to go and jump into the Arno or to go home and confess everything. "They will certainly kill me," he thought.

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"But I will gladly be killed—I can but die, and then I shall go to the Madonna;" and he went home principally that he might be killed.

The door was shut; he could not reach the knocker; no one was in the street, but a stone lay there, and with that he thundered against the door. "Who is there?" came a voice from within.

"It is I," he said; "Bellissima is gone—let me in, and then kill me."

Terror seized Madame's soul; she glanced at the wall, the little lambskin jacket was hanging there.

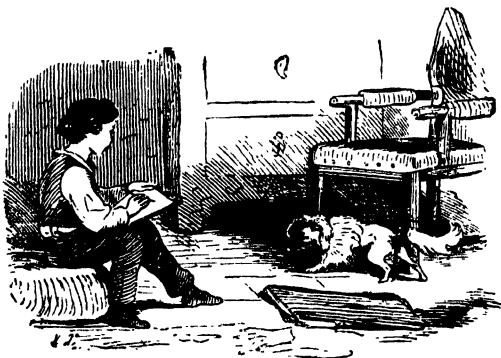
"Bellissima at the police-station!" she cried. "You wicked boy! how did you entice her out? She will be frozen! That poor little creature all among those rough men!"

The old man was sent out in search at once—the woman bewailed herself—the boy cried. All the neighbours came in, and among them was the painter; he took the boy between his knees, questioned him, and by degrees drew from him the whole story of the metal pig and the picture gallery—and it was rather a puzzling story at the best. The painter soothed the child, and tried to pacify the woman, but she utterly refused to be comforted till her

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husband came back with *Bellissima*, rescued from the police-station. Then there was an outburst of joy! The painter caressed the little lad and gave him a handful of drawings.

Such comical heads—such splendid sketches! And if the metal pig itself was not among them! Nothing could be more delightful. Only a



few strokes, and there it was on the paper; and even the house behind it was there, too!

Why, any one who can paint can summon up the whole world round him in his home!

At earliest dawn on the next day the boy took up a lead pencil and tried to copy the metal pig on the back of one of the drawings. He managed it—it was rather on one side,

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perhaps, rather up and down, one leg thick and one thin, but every one could recognize it ; the lad himself was rejoiced at it.

He saw well that the pencil would not go as straight as it ought ; the next day another metal pig appeared on another drawing ; that was a hundred times better ; the third was so good that every one owned it.

But the glove-making fared badly, and errands in the city fared still worse : the metal pig had taught the lad that all pictures can be put on paper ; and the whole city of Florence is a picture-book, if one will but turn over the leaves. In the Piazza della Trinita is a slender column, and on the column stands Justice, with bandaged eyes, holding her balance. She too came on the white paper, and it was the glove-maker's little 'prentice who had placed her there. The picture-gallery increased, but as yet it contained nothing but studies of still life ; when one day up came Bellissima frolicking round the child. " Stand still," he cried, " and then you shall come into my gallery." But Bellissima would not stand still, and was obliged to be tied by her head and her tail.

She leaped and struggled till the string was pulled quite tight ; and at her barks up

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came her mistress. "You wicked, wicked boy! my poor dog!" was all that she could articulate: she thrust the boy from her, drove him from the house as an ungrateful vagabond and hardened lad, and turned back to lament over the half-strangled Bellissima.

Just at the moment the painter was coming up the staircase, and—this is the crisis of the whole story.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition of paintings in the *Accademia delle Arti*. Two pictures, hung side by side, attracted a crowd of spectators. The smaller one represented a merry little lad drawing. His model was an oddly-shorn white poodle, which had evidently refused to stand still, consequently it had been tied up by its head and tail: there was a vividness and truth in the little painting that spoke to every heart. The painter—so people said—was a poor, self-taught Florentine, who had been taken out of the streets when quite a little child by an old glove-maker. A well-known painter had discovered his talent just as the boy was being driven out of the house, because he had tied up his mistress's favourite poodle to make her his model.

The picture—and the larger one by its side

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still more clearly—showed that the glove-maker's little 'prentice-boy had become a great painter. In the second picture a beautiful, ragged boy sat sleeping in the street, his head leaning against the metal pig which stands near the Porta Rosa. All the spectators knew the spot. The child's arms were thrown over the pig's neck; the little one was sound asleep and the lamp in front of the Madonna cast a bright light across the child's pale, lovely face.

It was a wonderful painting, in a rich gold frame; at each corner hung a laurel wreath, but between the green leaves was twisted a black ribbon, and a long fall of crape hung down to the ground.

The young artist was dead.

The Neighbours.

ANY one would have thought that something important was going on in the duck-pond; but nothing at all was happening. All the ducks who were resting quietly on the water—or standing on their heads in it, and

they can do that—swam all at once to the shore ; you could see their footmarks in the wet earth and hear their quacking far and wide. The pond—smooth as a mirror a moment ago—was ruffled all at once with a great commotion. A few minutes back it mirrored every tree and bush in the neighbourhood—the old farm-house with the holes in the thatch, and the swallows' nests, and, above all, the great rose-bush all ablaze with roses ; it covered the whole wall, and hung down towards the water, where everything was seen as in a picture, only that all the objects stood upon their heads, as it were ; now that the water was so deeply stirred, one thing flowed into another, and there was an end of the picture. Two feathers, which some of the ducks had let fall, rocked to and fro ; suddenly they darted forwards as if the wind had come, but it never came, so they had to stay where they were ; and the water gradually grew smooth again. The roses mirrored themselves once more ; they were wondrously lovely, but they knew it not, for no one had ever told them. The sun shone through their delicate green leaves, all breathed out sweetest fragrance, all felt as we feel when we are penetrated with the consciousness of our happiness.

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"How beautiful it is to live!" cried the roses. "Only one thing I wish, and that is to kiss the sun; it is so warm and mild. And I should like to kiss our sister roses in the pond below; and the pretty little birds in the nest. There are some overhead, too; they put out their heads and twitter faintly; they have no feathers like their father and mother. They are good neighbours—those above and those below. How beautiful it is to live!"

The young birds above and below—those below, indeed, were only the reflection of the others in the pond—were sparrows: their parents were sparrows, too; they had taken possession of the empty swallow's nest, and lived in it as if it belonged to them.

"Are those ducks' children swimming about down there?" said the young sparrows, pointing to the feathers on the water.

"If you want to ask a question, *do* ask something sensible," said the mother. "Don't you see that they are feathers, living clothes, such as I wear myself, and such as you will wear? Only ours are finer. All the same, I wish we had them up here; they would help keep the nest warm. I am curious to know what the ducks were so frightened at: it couldn't

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be at us, though I certainly said 'Tweet' rather loudly. Those stupid roses ought to know, but they never know anything; they only look at themselves, and send out fragrance. I am heartily sick of such neighbours."

"Listen to those dear little birds up there," said the roses; "they are beginning to try and sing, but they hardly can manage it yet. They will soon learn; and what a pleasure that must be! It is nice to have such merry neighbours."

Suddenly two horses came galloping up to be watered; a peasant lad was riding on one of them; he had laid aside most of his clothes, but he wore his large, black, broad-brimmed hat. He rode boldly to the deepest part, whistling like a bird, and as he passed the rose-bush he gathered one of the roses, stuck it in his hat, and so rode off gaily adorned. The other roses looked after their sister, and said, "Whither is she going?" But no one knew.

"I should like to go out into the world," said one of them; "and yet it is beautiful here at home. All day long the sun shines warm and bright; and at night the heaven is lovelier still; we can see that through all the little holes." It was the stars she meant, but she knew no better.

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"We make it lively for the old house," said the sparrows; "and the swallow's nest brings luck, folks say, so that the people may well be proud of us. But what neighbours! A rose tree like that against the wall creates damp; I should think it will be got rid of and corn sown in its place. The roses are good for nothing but to look at, and to smell, or, at the most, to stick in one's hat. Every year—I know that from my mother—they fall off. The farmer's wife stores them up and strews salt between them; then they receive a French name, which I neither can nor will pronounce, and they have to be sprinkled on fire if they are to smell sweet. That is their path in life: they only exist for the eye and the nose; and now you know."

When the evening closed in and the gnats danced in the warm air under the rosy clouds, the nightingale flew up to sing to the roses. She sang that the beautiful fades like the sunlight in this world—and that the beautiful lives for ever! The roses thought that the nightingale was singing of himself, and one might well think so; but they never imagined that the song was meant for them alone. They were very happy in listening, however, and wondered whether all the young sparrows would

grow up into nightingales. "I could understand that bird perfectly," said the young sparrows; "all but one word, that is—what is the beautiful?" "Nothing at all," said the mother sparrow; "at least, something purely for outside show. Up yonder, in the courtyard of the castle, where the pigeons have a house of their own, and corn and peas served out to them every day—I have dined with them myself, and so shall you, in time; for, tell me your friends, and I will tell who you are—up yonder, at the castle, there are two birds with green necks and a crest on their heads; they can spread out their tails like a great wheel; it is painted with every colour and dazzles one's eyes quite painfully. These birds are called peacocks, and *that* is the beautiful. If they were only plucked a little they would look no better than we do. I would have plucked them already if they had not been so big."

"I will pluck them," chirped the youngest sparrow, who had, as yet, no feathers of his own.

In the farm-house lived two young married people, who loved each other dearly, and were cheertul and industrious. Everything round them looked bright and pretty. On Sunday

mornings the young wife came out and gathered a handful of the loveliest roses, which she placed in a glass of water on the sideboard.

"Now I know that it is Sunday," said the young farmer. He kissed his little wife, and they sat down and read together out of the prayer-book, hand in hand; the sunlight fell across the roses and rested on the youthful pair.

"That sight is quite too tedious," said the mother sparrow, who could see into the room from her nest; "quite too tedious." And she flew away.

The same thing happened on next Sunday, for every week fresh roses were put into the glass, and yet the rose-bush was covered with roses. The young sparrows had their feathers now, and would have liked to fly with their mother, but she would not allow them to do so, so they had to stay at home. She flew off alone, and however it may have happened I cannot tell, but there she was, caught in a snare which some boys had set in the hedge. The horse-hair held her leg so tightly that she thought it was being cut through, and trembled with pain and terror. The boys rushed up and seized the bird by no means gently.

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"It's only a sparrow," they said; but they held her fast, and whenever she cried out they struck her on the beak.

In the farm-house lived an old man, a merry, wandering pedler, who knew how to cut out curious balls and figures of toilet soap. When he saw the boys, and heard them say they could do nothing with the bird, he said, "Shall we smarten it up a little?" The mother sparrow felt a deadly chill of fear. Out of his colour-box the old man took some bright gold, and sent the lads to fetch some white of an egg; the bird's feathers were covered first with the egg and then with the gold, till she was gilt all over. The glitter and finery only made her tremble in every limb. Then the old man tore away a piece of the red lining of his coat, cut it into vandykes till it looked like a cock's comb, and gummed it on the bird's head.

"Now you shall see Mr. Goldcoat fly," said the old man, letting the sparrow loose. She flew away in mortal terror, ablaze with the radiant sunlight. How she glittered! All the sparrows—nay, even an old crow, though he was a *very* old bird—were startled at the sight, and flew after her to find out what she was.

Driven onwards by dread and horror, the

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sparrow made for her nest: she was ready to sink helpless to the earth. The number of the pursuing birds increased, and some of them already tried to peck her.

“Look at him! Just look at him!” they all cried. “Look at him! Just look at him!” cried the young sparrows, as she reached her nest. “It must be a young peacock; he is dressed in all colours; he dazzles one’s eyes, just as our mother said. Tweet! That is the beautiful.” And they pecked at the sparrow with their beaks so that she could not get in the nest; the poor bird was so hemmed in that she could not even say “Tweet!” much less “I am your mother!” And now the whole cruel flock set upon her and pulled out feather after feather, till she fell faint and bleeding into the rose-bush.

“Poor little thing!” cried all the roses. “Do not fear. We will hide you; lean your head on us.”

But the sparrow opened her wings wide, drew them close to her side, and fell dead by the side of her neighbours, the fair, sweet roses.

“Tweet!” echoed from the nest above. “Where can mother be staying? It is quite incomprehensible! We don’t hear even a chirp

from her. Can it mean that we are to shift for ourselves? She has left us the nest as our inheritance. Now, to which of us must it belong when we are all married?"

"Yes; I can't have you staying with me when I set up housekeeping, with a wife and children," said the youngest.

"Indeed! I shall most likely have more wives and children than you," said the second.

"But I am the eldest," cried the third. Then they all grew hot over it, flapped their wings, and pecked with their beaks, till, flop! one after the other fell out of the nest on to the ground. There they lay, their heads on one side, their eyes blinking furiously—in a terrible temper. That was their stupid way of behaving.

They could fly a little, and practice improved them. At last they all hit upon a signal by which they would be able to recognize each other if they afterwards met in the world. The signal was "Tweet" and three scrapes with the left foot.

The sparrow who was left in possession of the nest made himself as big as he could, for he was now sole proprietor. But his grandeur did not last long, for that very night the roof caught fire, the whole house was burned down,

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and the sparrow with it; the young master and mistress, however, escaped unhurt. When the sun rose, and all around looked as if it had just awoke from a refreshing sleep, nothing was left of the farm-house but a few old blackened beams by the chimney, who was now his own master. Smoke was still rising in clouds from the ruins; but outside the rose-bush bloomed unharmed, fresh and beautiful as ever; every flower and spray was mirrored in the clear water.

"See how lovely the roses look by that blackened house!" cried a passer-by. "No one could imagine anything more picturesque! I must jot it down."

And the speaker took out a little book with white leaves; he was a painter, and with his rapid pencil he sketched the smoking house, the blackened beams, the falling chimney, which seemed tottering more and more: but in the foreground was the lovely rose-bush which had suggested the whole picture.

Later in the day two of the sparrows came back; "Where is the house?" they cried. "Where is the nest? Tweet! Everything is burned down, and our brother into the bargain! That's what *he* has got by keeping our nest.

The roses have got off well. There they stand, with their pink cheeks ; they are not the people to fret about other folk's troubles. I have no wish to accost them, and it is very ugly here in my opinion." And they flew away.

On a clear, sunny, autumn day—a day that looked like the middle of summer—flocks of pigeons, black, white, and coloured, hopped to and fro in the courtyard of the castle. How they glittered in the sunshine ! The mother pigeon said to her young ones, "Place yourselves in groups ! Place yourselves in groups ! That looks much better."

"What are those little grey creatures hopping after us ?" asked an old pigeon, with red and green eyes. "Little greycoats ! Little greycoats !" she cried.

"They are sparrows—good sort of folk. We have always kept up our reputation for piety and charity, so we had better allow them to pick up the grain. They don't address us, and they bow and scrape very properly."

So they did ; three times with the right foot, three times with the left foot, and then they said "Tweet !" On which they recognized each other at once as the sparrows belonging to the old nest.

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"Very good living here," said the sparrows. The pigeons puffed themselves out, strutted proudly about, and had their own opinion about everything. "Do you see that pouter pigeon?" said one of them. "Just look how she gobbles up the peas! She eats too much, and picks out all the best! Cur-roo! Cur-roo! How she sets up her crest—the ugly, spiteful thing! Cur-roo! Cur-roo!"

Every eye sparkled with malice. "Place yourselves in groups! Place yourselves in groups! Little greycoats! Little greycoats!" so the chatter went on—and so it may go on for thousands of years.

The sparrows ate with a will: they listened attentively to all that was said, and even tried to place themselves in groups, but it was not becoming to them. They had eaten enough now, so they left the pigeons, and talked them over freely among themselves; then they slipped under the garden pallisading, and, as the house door was open, one of them who had eaten so much that he felt quite courageous, hopped on to the threshold. "Tweet!" he cried, "I can venture so far!"

"Tweet!" said another, "so dare I, and a little farther too!" And he hopped into the

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room. No one was there ; and the third, who had noticed that, flew still farther in, crying, " Neck or nothing ! This is a queer-looking human nest ; and what have they got there ? Now, what is that ? "

Right before the sparrows bloomed the roses, and mirrored themselves in the water by the blackened beams and falling chimney. " Now, what can that be ? However did it get here in the castle ? "

The sparrows tried to fly over the rose-bush and round the chimney, but they only flew against a dead wall. It was a large, beautiful painting, which the painter had made from his little sketch.

" Tweet ! " cried the sparrows, " it is nothing ! It only looks like something. Tweet ! that is the beautiful ! Can you make anything of it ? I can't." And they flew away, for some people came into the room.

Days and years passed away : the pigeons had often cooed and quarrelled, the spiteful birds. The sparrows had frozen in winter, and in summer had lived in clover ; they were all betrothed or married, or whatever they call it. All had young families ; and each bird thought his own the cleverest and best looking ; one

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few this way, and one that, and whenever they met they recognized each other by their 'Tweet!' and scrape with the left foot. The eldest had remained a spinster, with neither nest nor young ones; it was her great fancy to see large cities, so she flew to Copenhagen.

There she saw a large, bright-looking house, close to the castle and the canal, where myriad little boats, laden with apples and crockery, sailed to and fro. The windows were broader below than above, and when the sparrow peeped through them the rooms looked to her like tulips, so gay and rich in colour. In the tulips stood figures of white marble, and some of gypsum, but that was all one to the sparrow. On the roof was a metal chariot drawn by metal horses, and driven by the Goddess of Victory. It was Thorwaldsen's Museum.

"What a glitter! What a show!" said the sparrow. "That must be the beautiful! Tweet! But it is larger than a peacock." She recalled what her mother had told her about the beautiful in the days of her youth. She flew down into the court; all around her was grand and splendid; palm branches were painted on the walls, and in the centre of the court a

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rose-tree in full bloom drooped its rich blossoms over a grave.

The sparrow flew towards it, for she saw several other birds of her own kind. "Tweet!" and three scrapes with her left foot; how often had she given the signal through the past year, and no one had answered, for people once parted do not meet every day; the greeting had grown into a habit with her.

But on this occasion three old sparrows and one young one answered with "Tweet!" and three scrapes of the left foot. "Dear me; good morning! and so we meet here. It is a fine place, but there is very little to eat. That is the beautiful! Tweet!"

Several people came out of the corridors where the lovely statues stood; they approached the grave of the master whose hand had created the marble forms. All of them stood with reverent faces round Thorwaldsen's grave; and some of them picked up a few of the fallen rose-leaves. They had come from afar; from sea-girt England, from Germany, from France. The fairest lady gathered a rose and placed it on her bosom. The sparrows began to think that the roses were monarchs here, and that the whole place had been built for them. It certainly

seemed very absurd to them; but as every one was showing love and honour to the roses, the sparrows did not wish to be left behind. "Tweet!" they cried, sweeping the ground with their tails, and blinking at the roses. They had not looked at them long before they felt certain that they were their old neighbours from the farmyard; and they were right. The painter who painted the picture had received permission to dig them up, and had given the whole tree to the architect, for no one had ever seen more beautiful roses. The architect had the tree planted over Thorwaldsen's grave, to bloom there for ever, as a symbol of the beautiful, and to offer up its fair pink leaves, that they might be carried away as memorials into many a distant land.

"Are you settled in this place?" asked the sparrows.

The roses nodded; they recognized their old neighbours, and were glad to see them again. "How beautiful it is to live and blossom!" they cried; "to see old friends and happy faces every day!" "Tweet!" cried the sparrows. "Yes; they are the very same. We remember the duck-pond they sprung from. Tweet! And now what a position they have gained! Well,

luck comes to some folk in their sleep ! Look ! there is a withered leaf—I can see it quite plainly.” And they pecked and pecked at it till the leaf fell off. But the rose-bush stood there fresher and fairer than ever ; the flowers gave out their fragrance in the sunshine, and shared the glory of the sculptor’s immortal name.



A Rose from the Grave of Homer.

EVERY Eastern song tells of the nightingale’s love for the rose ; and how in the silent starlit nights the feathered songster greets his beloved with a serenade.

Not far from Smyrna, under the tall plantain trees where the merchant drives his laden camels, who raise their heads and tread proudly on the sacred ground, I saw a blooming rose tree : wood pigeons flew among the branches of the trees, and their wings gleamed in the sunshine like mother-of-pearl.

The rose tree bore one flower more beautiful than all the rest, and to that one the nightingale poured out his love tale ; a dew-drop shone like a tear of pity on her petals, and the spray which bore her drooped above a few great stones.

“ Here rests the world’s greatest singer,” cried the rose ; “ my breath shall perfume his grave, my leaves shall rest upon it when the wind strips them from me. The singer of Troy became the dust from which I spring. I, a rose from the grave of Homer, am too sacred a thing to blossom for a poor nightingale ! ”

The nightingale sang himself to death. The camel driver came up with his laden beasts and black slaves ; his little son found the dead bird, and buried the sweet singer in Homer’s grave : the rose trembled in the wind.

Evening came on ; the rose folded her petals closer, slept and dreamed. It was a lovely summer’s day : a group of foreigners approached ;

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they were making a pilgrimage to Homer's grave. Among the strangers was a singer from the north, from the home of the white mist and the Aurora: he gathered the rose, pressed it in a book, and carried it away to another continent, to his distant fatherland. The rose faded from grief and died in the narrow book, which the stranger opened in his home, and said, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer!"

This was what the flower dreamed; and she awoke and trembled in the wind: a dew-drop fell from her petals on the singer's grave. The sun rose, the rose glowed fairer than ever; the sun was shining bright, she was still in her own Asia. Footsteps were heard, and foreigners from Europe, such as the rose had seen in her dream, approached the spot. Among them was a poet from the north; he broke off the rose, kissed its leaves, and carried it away to the land of mist and of the Aurora.

The dead flower lies, dried and colourless, within his "Iliad," and, as in a dream, she hears him open the book and say, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer!"



Ib and Christina.

NOT far from the silver river Gudenau, in North Jutland, in the forest which stretches far inland from the river bank, rises a ridge of land, and runs through the wood like a fortress wall. To the west of this mound stands a farm house surrounded by poor land, where the sandy soil showed through the thin crops of rye and barley. A few years ago, the people who lived here worked the farm, and had besides, three sheep, a pig, and two oxen. In a word, they had plenty to eat and enough to live on, if one takes life as it comes; indeed, they could have afforded to keep two horses, but they said, as the other farmers of the district did, that a horse eats himself up—wastes as much as he gets. Jeppe-Jans worked in his field in summer, and in winter he made wooden shoes. He had a man to help him in this latter trade; one who, like himself, could make the shoes strong, light, and shapely: they carved wooden spoons as well,

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and that brought in money. It would have been doing the Jeppe-Jansens wrong to say that they were poor folk.

Little seven-year-old Ib, the only son, used to sit watching them at their work, and cutting away at a stick, or, as it sometimes happened, at his own finger; but one day he made such progress that his bit of stick was cut into something that looked like tiny wooden shoes, and then Ib said that he would give them to Christina. Who was Christina? She was the boatman's little daughter, as fair and delicate as the child of a duke: if she had only had better clothes no one could have thought that her home was that little hovel on the heath. Her father was a widower, and earned his living by taking boat-loads of fuel from the forest to the eel-pond and the eel-weir at Silkeborg; sometimes he even went as far as the little town of Randers.

There was no one to look after Christina while he was away, so that the little girl was generally with him in the boat, or in the forest among the ferns and brambles; once his business took him as far as the little town, and that was it which brought Christina across the heath to Jeppe-Jansen's.

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She was a year younger than Ib, and they agreed together in everything; they shared each other's bread and blackberries when they were hungry, they grubbed together in the sand, they ran and crawled and played about together everywhere. One day they walked by themselves along the ridge of the mound, and far into the forest; one day they found some snipe's eggs—that was a great event.

Ib had never been on the heath where Christina's father lived, and had never been on the river; but both these pieces of good luck befell him, for Christina's father invited him, and took him to the lonely hut on the heath.

It was evening when Ib arrived, and the next morning he and Christina sat perched upon the logs of timber in the boat, eating bread and blackberries, while the father and his man pushed the boat forward by the aid of their long poles: the current was with them, and they made good way. Sometimes the river opened into lakes, sometimes it seemed closed in by wood, and reeds, and sedge; but still the boat moved onward, even though the great trees bent down to meet the water, and the peeled oak branches stretched towards them, as if they had turned up their shirt-sleeves on purpose

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to show their gnarled and naked arms. Old
500

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willow trees, washed loose from the shore by the swift current, clung convulsively to the soil with their roots, and formed tiny islands; water-lilies rose and fell on the stream: it was a lovely voyage! And at last they came to the great eel-weir, where the water rushed madly through the flood-gates; that *was* beautiful, thought Ib and Christina.

At that time there was neither factory nor town, nothing but the old building with its poor farm land; few people and few cattle were to be seen; the roar of the water through the sluices, and the cry of the wild duck were almost the only signs of life at Silkeborg. When the boat was unloaded, Christina's father bought a bundle of eels and a sucking pig, which were neatly packed in a basket and placed at the stern of the boat.

Then they set out on their return, against the stream this time, but the wind was favourable, and when they hoisted their sail, they sped along as if they had been drawn by two horses.

When they reached the place where the boatman's companion lived, at a little distance inland, the boat was moored. The two men stepped ashore, having told the children to sit

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still. But that was just what the children could not do, at least for long together; they must needs peep into the basket where the eels and the sucking pig lay; then they must feel the sucking pig and have it in their hands, and since they both wanted to do so at the same time, they managed to let it fall into the water, and away went the pig down the current. There was a fearful business!

Ib sprang to the land and ran off a little way from the boat. "Take me with you," cried Christina, leaping after him. In a few minutes they were closed in by the thicket, and could neither see the boat nor the shore; they ran a little way farther, and then Christina fell down and began to cry.

Ib lifted her up. "Follow me," he said, "our house is up there." But the house was not up there. They wandered on across the dry, rattling leaves of last year, and the rotten branches that cracked under their little feet: suddenly they heard a piercing cry, and stood still to listen—it was the scream of an eagle echoing through the wood, and a horrible sound the children thought it. Before them in the forest large purple blackberries grew in plenty; they could not help stopping to gather some,

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and they ate the sweet, ripe fruit till their mouths and cheeks were blue. And then they heard the scream again.

"There'll be a pretty to-do about that pig," said Christina. "Come, we will go to our house," said Ib; "it is somewhere here in the wood." They went on farther till they came to a little path, but the path did not lead them home. Darkness came on, and the children were afraid; the strange stillness that reigned around them was broken only by the harsh screech of the horned owl, or of some other night bird; at last the children lay down under a bush; Ib cried, and Christina cried, and when they had cried for a long time, they stretched themselves out on the withered leaves and went to sleep.

The sun stood high in the sky when the children woke: they were cold, but they saw the sunbeams falling warm and bright on to a hill near their sleeping place. Ib thought if they climbed up there, they would be able to see his father's house; but they had wandered far away from the house, into quite a different part of the forest. They climbed the hill, and found themselves looking down into a clear, transparent lake; the fish lay basking in the

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sunshine; all that the children saw was as new as it was unexpected: but close to them grew a large hazel-nut bush, loaded with the finest nuts. The children gathered them by handfuls and ate the sweet young kernels that were only just formed. The next surprise that befell them was mixed with terror. Out of the bushes stepped a tall old woman with coal black hair, and eyes where the white gleamed out as in the eyes of a Moor. She was a gipsy, and carried a bundle on her back, and a knotted stick in her hand. The children could not always understand what she said; she drew three large nuts out of her pocket, and said that inside these nuts lay the most beautiful things in the world—they were wishing nuts she said.

She spoke so kindly that Ib plucked up his courage and asked her if she would give him the nuts. She gave them to him, and gathered a pocketful more from the bush.

Ib and Christina stared at the wishing nuts with open eyes.

"Is there a carriage and pair in this nut?" said Ib, doubtfully.

"Yes, yes," said the woman; "golden carriage and golden horses."

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"Then give me that nut," said Christina. Ib gave it her, and the old woman tied it safely in her handkerchief.

"And is there a little handkerchief, like Christina's, in this nut?" said Ib.

"There are ten handkerchiefs," said the old woman; "fine clothes, stockings, hat, and veil."

"Then I shall have that," said Christina, and Ib gave her the second nut; the third was a little black-looking thing. "You can keep that," said Christina; "that is a nice one, too."

"What is inside it?" asked Ib.

"The very best of all for you," answered the gipsy.

Ib held his nut tight. The woman promised to put the children into the right path, and they walked on farther; certainly she led them in the very opposite road from the one they should have taken, but do not let any one accuse the old gipsy of wishing to steal the children.

In the heart of the wood they met the forest ranger; he knew Ib, and by his help the two children reached home again. Everybody had been in great distress about them, and all was forgiven and forgotten, although they certainly deserved a scolding at the very least; first, because they had dropped the pig into the

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water; and secondly, because they had run away.

Christina went home to her father's on the heath, and Ib lived on at the farm on the outskirts of the forest by the old mound. The first thing Ib did on his return was to take out the little black nut from his pocket—the nut which held the very best of all—place it carefully between the door and the hinge, and shut the door to with all his force. The nut cracked readily enough, but there was not much kernel to be seen, only black, moist earth, that looked like snuff; it was hollow or worm-eaten, as one says.

“I thought as much,” said Ib. “How could there be room inside for the best of all? Christina will get no more out of her two nuts; neither fine clothes nor a golden carriage.”

The winter came on, and the New Year, and several years passed by. At last Ib's confirmation day drew near, and the boy went all the winter through to be prepared by the pastor of the next village. About this time the boatman paid a visit to Ib's father, and brought the news that Christina was gone to service, and that it was a perfect godsend for her, that she

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had fallen into such good hands. Only think ! she was going to the rich innkeeper's at Herning ; wealthy, respectable people ; they lived miles away to the westward, far from Ib and the forest. She would have to help the barmaid ; and after awhile, when she was old enough to be confirmed, the master and mistress would take to her altogether, if she had behaved herself well.

So Ib and Christina bade each other good-bye. "The little sweethearts," people called them : Christina showed him at parting that she still had the two nuts which he had given her when they were straying in the wood ; and she said, too, that she had put safely in her trunk the little pair of wooden shoes which he had carved for her. And then they parted.

Ib was confirmed ; but he stayed on in his mother's home, for his father had died years ago. The young man was clever at his trade, and in the summer his mother had no need to keep a man, Ib could manage the farm alone.

He seldom heard of Christina. Sometimes a chance postilion or eel-seller would bring news of her. She was going on very well in her prosperous home ; and when she was confirmed she wrote a letter to her father, and sent a message to Ib and his mother. In the letter she

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said that her mistress had given her some new under-clothing, and a beautiful dress. That was certainly a piece of good news.

The following spring there was a knock at Ib's door, and who should it be but Christina and her father, who had come to spend the day! A conveyance had been running from Herning to the neighbouring parish, and Christina had availed herself of the opportunity to come and see her friends. She was as beautiful as a fine lady, and dressed very prettily, in clothes that had been made on purpose for her. There she stood all dressed in her best, while Ib had on his work-day clothes. He could not speak a word, he could only hold her hand fast between his own, but his lips had nothing to say. Christina had, however; and she chattered on without a stop, and kissed Ib at meeting, without ceremony.

"Did you know me again directly, Ib?" she said; but even when they two were left alone together, and he stood, still holding her hand in his, he could only say, "You have grown into a fine lady—and I look such a rough fellow! Oh, how I have thought of you, Christina, and of the dear old times!"

Arm and arm they wandered along the mound

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and gazed across the river to the heath and the hills overgrown with yellow broom; but Ib said nothing, and yet by the time they parted, it had grown clear to him that Christina must be his wife. Had they not been called sweet-hearts from their babyhood? It seemed to him that they were already a betrothed pair, although neither of them had spoken.

They had only a few hours to spend together; Christina was obliged to go back to the neighbouring village, because the coach to Herning started so early in the morning. Ib and her father walked with her as far as the village: it was a lovely moonlight night, and when they reached the village Ib could not loose Christina's hand, his eyes brightened, and the words which came so slowly from his lips rose from the very depths of his heart. "If you have not grown too proud, Christina," he said, "and if you can make yourself happy in my mother's cottage as my wedded wife—we two will marry—but we can afford to wait a little."

"Yes, indeed; we can afford to wait a long time, Ib," she said, pressing his hand as he kissed her at parting. "I can trust you I know; and I think I am fond of you, but I must sleep upon it."

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They parted, and as Ib walked homewards with the boatman he told him that he and Christina were as good as engaged; and the boatman said he had expected as much. He went home with Ib, and spent the night at the farm. Not another word was said about the engagement.

A year went by, during which time two letters were exchanged between Ib and Christina. "True till death," was written at the end. One day the boatman arrived with a message from Christina, which he seemed to find a difficulty in delivering: but the burden of it was that Christina was going on very well—famously indeed; she had grown into a very pretty girl, with plenty of admirers and suitors—her master's son was staying in the house, he had a good situation at some office in Copenhagen, and he was very fond of Christina. She was not averse to him either, and his parents made no objection. But Christina felt uneasy about Ib; she was afraid he thought too much of her, and so she was almost resolved to give up her good prospects, the boatman said.

At first Ib did not speak, but he turned as pale as death; he shook his head, and said at

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last, "Christina must not give up anything for me."

"Well, then, write as much to her—just a few lines," said the boatman.

And Ib sat down to write, but the words would not come at his call; he crossed them out, and tore up sheet after sheet, and on the following morning his letter was ready. This is what he wrote :—

"I have read the letter you sent to your father, and I see from what you say that you are doing very well, and may do better. Ask your own heart, Christina; weigh well what lies before you if you take me for your husband; I have not much to offer you. Do not think of me or my condition, but of your own eternal welfare. You are bound to me by no promise; and if you have bound yourself in your own heart, I set you free. May every happiness fall to your lot, Christina! God will know how to comfort me.

"Ever, your true friend.

"IB."

The letter was despatched, and Christina duly received it.

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In the middle of November the banns were put up for her in the little church on the heath, and in Constantinople, where the bridegroom lived; and she went with her mother-in-law to Copenhagen to be married, for her lover could not leave his business for a second long journey into Jutland. On her way Christina took leave of her father; very little was said on the subject to Ib, and he asked no questions.

He had grown very silent and thoughtful, his old mother said, and perhaps that was why he often thought of the three nuts which he had received from the old gipsy. Christina had chosen the two which contained fine clothes, and a golden carriage; that had all come true—she would find all that in the capital—her wishes would be fulfilled. To Ib the nut had promised nothing but black earth—"the best of all for him," as the gipsy said—yes; true enough, that would be fulfilled also. Now he understood what the woman meant. In the black churchyard mould, in the silent grave, it would be best of all for him to lie.

Years passed away; not so very many, but very, very long, Ib thought. The old folk at

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the inn were dead, and their son inherited the whole property : many thousand dollars, people said. Now Christina would have her golden carriage and fine clothes in plenty.

In the two following years there came no news of Christina, and when at last her father received a letter, it did not seem to have been written in joy and prosperity. Poor Christina ! Neither she nor her husband knew how to make a good use of their wealth ; the money did not prosper—no blessing rested on it—none had been sought for.

The heath was bright with bloom, yellow with dying fern, and white with snow ; the spring sun shone across the ridge where Ib lived and worked. He was driving his plough across the field, when suddenly the plough-share came in contact with something—a flint, Ib thought. He stooped down to see, and a gleam of shining metal was seen in the furrow.

It was a heavy golden bracelet, which had lain there since the days when the Huns fought together, and filled the land with their graves.

Ib showed it to the pastor, who explained to him its value, and sent Ib and his treasure

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to the magistrate. The magistrate spoke of it to the President of the Museum, and at length Ib was advised to betake himself and his bracelet to Copenhagen.

"You have reaped from the earth the best that it could give you," said the President.

"The best of all," thought Ib; "if this is the best, the gipsy was still right in what she said."

Ib went by the ferry from Aarhus to Copenhagen; to him who had never been further than across his own river, it was like taking a voyage across the ocean.

In Copenhagen he received the value of the treasure; it was a large sum, six hundred dollars! Ib of the heath wandered to and fro in the great city.

The evening before his return home, he lost himself in the narrow lanes of the suburb of Christianshafen. He was alone in the street. At last a little child ran out of one of the wretched houses, and Ib asked her to tell him the way to the street where he lodged; but the little creature only looked at him timidly through her tears. He asked her what was the matter, but he could not understand her answer. As they walked along together the

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light from a street lamp fell on the child's face, and Ib started—for it was Christina herself, just as he remembered her in his childhood, who stood before him.

He followed the little girl into a poverty-stricken house; ascended the crumbling staircase to a little garret, close under the roof. The air was close and stifling; there was no light, but in a corner of the room some one was breathing heavily. Ib struck a match, and saw that the child's mother lay dying on the wretched bed.

"Can I be of any use to you?" said Ib. "The little girl has brought me here. I am a stranger in the town, but is there no neighbour—no one whom I can call?" He raised the dying woman's head and smoothed her pillow.

It was Christina of the heath!

He had not mentioned her name for many years: he did not care to wake up old sorrows. What report said of her was not good; the money which her husband had inherited had done him harm; he had thrown up his situation, travelled in foreign countries for months together, and on his return had lived in great style and got into debt.

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His summer friends and acquaintances said of him that he had squandered his money like a madman. One morning his body was found in the canal.

Christina herself felt the touch of death at her heart; her youngest child, born in misery, lay in its grave; and now the mother was waiting for death in the squalid garret. In her childhood she might have lived through the sorrow; but since then she had been accustomed to luxury and splendour. It was her eldest child, her little Christina, suffering from cold and hunger, who had led Ib to the bedside.

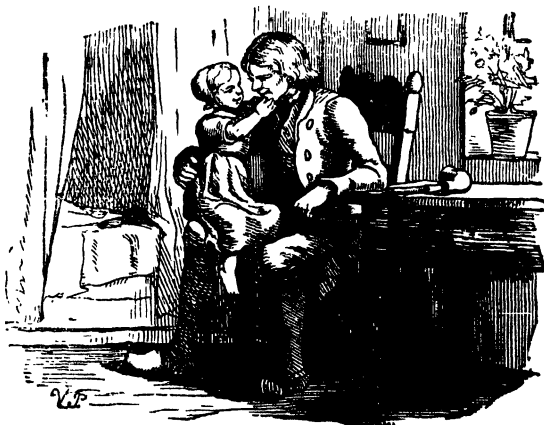
"My trouble is that I am leaving this poor child," she gasped. "When I am dead, what will become of her?" She could say no more.

Ib struck another match, and lighted the piece of rushlight on the table; the flame lit up the wretched chamber.

He looked at the little girl, and thought of Christina in her youth; for her sake he could learn to love the child. The dying woman looked at him, and her eyes dilated. Did she know him? He could not tell, for no word crossed her lips.

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In the forest, by the river Gudenau and the heath, the air was heavy and damp; the heather had lost its glory of colour; autumnal storms whirled the yellow leaves into the river and across the heath to the hut where the boatman once lived. Strangers lived there



now; but by the mound, sheltered by lofty trees, stood the farm-house, newly painted and restored. A bright turf fire burned on the hearth, and within the pleasant room was the sunshine of two childish eyes, the bird-like music of red, childish lips. Life and joy

filled the house; Christina was there at last; she sat on Ib's knee; he was to her father and mother all in one, for her own parents had vanished out of her life as dreams will vanish from the hearts of children, and of older people too.

Ib dwelt in peace; a wealthy man in his happy home. Christina slept in the churchyard at Copenhagen.

Her life had ended in poverty and wretchedness. Ib had gold; he had steered his life's-boat safe to port;—and he had Christina too.

The Jewish Maiden.

IN the charity school there sat among the other children a little Jewish maiden; she was a good, intelligent little girl, clever at her lessons, and generally at the head of her class. But from one class she was shut out altogether. She might not join in the religious instruction, for the school was a Christian school.

While the class was going on she read, learned her geography lesson, or worked her

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sum; but that was soon done, and when she knew her lesson off by heart she let the book lie open before her, while she listened to the teacher's words—listened more earnestly than any of the other children.

The teacher became aware of her attention. "Read your book, Sarah," he said, gently, but her dark eyes were fixed upon his face; and once when he asked a question she was the only one who answered. She had listened, understood, and pondered in her heart all that he had taught.

Her father, a poor, honest man, had made it a condition when he sent his daughter to the school that she should be excluded from all lessons on the Christian faith. But as it would have caused a confusion, or perhaps made the other children jealous, if she had had a holiday while the lesson was being given, she had always remained in the room. Now that could not be allowed any longer.

The teacher went to her father and begged him either to take his daughter away or to let her become a Christian. "I can no longer remain an idle spectator of the child's earnest face, of her longings to learn the words of our holy gospel," said he.

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The father burst into tears. "I am not learned in our law," he said, "but Sarah's mother was firm in her faith as a daughter of Israel, and I promised her on her dying bed that the child should never be a Christian. I must keep my oath—it binds me as if it were a vow to my God."

And the little Jewish child was taken from the Christian school.

Years passed away.

In a humble family, in a small provincial town, there lived as servant a poor girl of the Hebrew faith. Her hair was black as ebony, her eyes were dark as night, but soft with the liquid lustre one sees in the dwellers in Eastern climes. It was Sarah. The expression in the face of the maiden was the same as in the face of the child when she sat upon the form at school and listened thoughtfully to the words of the Christian teacher.

Every Sunday the organ sounded from the church, and she heard the echoing hymns; they floated across the street to the house where the Jewess moved diligent and faithful among her daily work.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day," sounded in her heart the voice

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of her law; but her Sabbath was passed in hard work for her Christian mistress. "Does God indeed reckon by days and hours?" she asked herself; and as the thought grew clearer in her soul, it became a pleasure to her to have an hour for prayer on the Christian Sunday. For while the others were at church she sat alone, and the solemn sounds of praise and prayer which penetrated to her poor kitchen hallowed even that lowly room. Then she took out her Old Testament, the guide and treasure of her people. All that her father and her teacher had said to her when she left the school was fresh in her mind; the vow made to her dying mother, that she would never forsake the faith of her people or receive Christian baptism, was still sacred to her. The New Testament must always be a sealed book to her, and yet she had learned so much from it—echoes of gospel teaching mingled with the distant memories of her childhood.

One day she sat in the corner of the sitting-room; her master was reading aloud; and she could listen with a clear conscience, for it was not the New Testament from which he read. It was an old history book,

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and he had chosen the story of a Hungarian knight taken prisoner by a Turkish pacha, who yoked him with his oxen to a plough and drove him on, with mocking words and cruel blows of the whip, till he was brought near to death. The knight's true wife sold all her jewellery and mortgaged castle and land; his friends raised large sums of money, for the ransom was enormously high. At length, however, it was procured, and the knight was rescued from slavery and disgrace. Weak and fainting he reached his home. Before long there rang out a fresh call to arms against the enemy of Christendom. The wounded knight heard the summons, and it left him neither rest nor peace. He caused himself to be lifted on to his war-horse, his cheeks won back their old colour, his strength seemed to be renewed, and he rode forth to battle and to victory. And the very pacha who had driven him, harnessed to his plough, now stood his prisoner in his castle dungeon. Before an hour had passed away the knight stood before the captive pacha.

“What fate, think you, awaits you now?” he asked him.

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"I know well," replied the pacha; "retribution."

"Yes," said the knight, "the retribution of a Christian. The law of Christ teaches us to forgive our enemies and to love our neighbours, for God is love. Go hence in peace: return to your home. I give you back to your dear ones. Henceforth be merciful to those who suffer."

The captive burst into tears. "How could I dream of the possibility of such forgiveness?" he cried. "Shame and torture seemed to be my inevitable doom, and to escape them I have taken poison. In a few hours I must die. There is no way of deliverance. Let me die in the faith of Christ." His prayer was granted.

This was the legend which the Jewess heard out of the old history book; all the household listened with sympathy and interest; but she—the silent Jewish maid—felt her heart beat and her eyes fill with tears. Once more she felt as she had done when she was a little child at school. The loveliness of the Christian faith filled her heart; tears rolled down her cheeks.

But the words of her dying mother rose

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in her heart. "Do not let my child become a Christian," and with them blended the voice of her sacred law, "Honour thy father and mother."

"I am not received into the Christian communion," she said. "They mock at me,



and call me 'Jew girl.' The neighbours did so last Sunday as I stood before the open church door, and watched the flame of the tapers on the altar, and listened to the singing of the people. Yes, I have felt the power of Christianity ever since I sat as a

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child on the form at school—a power like the sunbeam’s—and, though I shut my eyes to the light, I cannot shut my heart. But I will not grieve my mother in her grave; I will not read the Christian Bible. I have still my father’s God, and I will cleave to Him.”



Years passed away.

The master died. His widow fell into poor circumstances; the servant was to be turned away. But Sarah would not leave the house; she was their support in time of need. She kept the home together, work-

ing early and late to earn their daily bread. No friend or relation came to their aid; the widow lost her health, and was at length unable to leave her bed. Sarah worked, and nursed the sick woman by day and night; she was mild and gentle as an angel from Heaven in the sorrowful house.

"There is the Bible on the table yonder," said the sick woman; "read to me a little, for the nights are so long, and I thirst to hear God's Word."

Sarah took the book, opened it, and read aloud; tears filled her eyes, but they glowed as she read, and a light rose in her heart.

"Mother," she cried, "your child may not receive the Christian baptism. You have so willed it, and I obey your will. In this world we are united, but beyond this world our union shall be in God. He leads us through death into the life beyond. He stoops to earth and to suffering, that we may rise to heaven and to His joy. I understand it now. I do not know how I have learned, but it is through Him—through Christ!"

She started as she spoke the blessed name. A thrill as of a fiery baptism shook her whole frame. Her limbs trembled, and she

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sank fainting to the ground, weaker than the sufferer on the bed.

"Poor Sarah!" cried the neighbours; "she is quite worn out with work and sitting up at night."

They sent her to the hospital, and there she died. From the hospital she was carried to her grave: not to the Christian resting place, *there* was no welcome for the Jewish maid—but to a lonely grave outside the wall.

But God's dear sunlight, as it streams upon the Christian burial-ground, falls also on the Jewish grave, and when the church re-echoes to the Christian hymn, the tones float above the outcast maiden: and for her, too, shall sound one day the resurrection call in the name of Christ her Saviour. For did He not say to His disciples, "John indeed baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire?"





Two Maids.

HAVE you ever seen a maid? I mean what the stonemasons call a maid; a thing with which they stamp down the pavement smooth and firm. That kind of maid is made of wood, and stands on a broad foot with iron vice-pins or ferrules. Its head is narrow, and through its waist is a stout stick which serves for its arms. Now you may look at the picture.

Two maids of that kind were standing in the warehouse-yard, among wheelbarrows, handcarts, wood-measures, and spades; a rumour had reached the whole community that the maids were never to be called maids any more. Hand-rammers was the new name invented in the stonemason's language for that which in the good old times everybody called maid.

Now there are, we know, independent women in the world; nurses, teachers, milliners, and dancers who can stand on one leg; and the two maids considered themselves

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to belong to this society; they were maids—and they were by no means willing to give up their time-honoured name and allow themselves to be spoken of as hand-rammers.

“Maid is the name of a human being,” they said; “but a hand-rammer is a thing,



and we will not be addressed as ‘Thing’—it is too insulting!”

“My betrothed would be quite capable of withdrawing from his engagement,” said the younger. She was engaged to a rammer-log; a machine which drives great stakes

into the earth ; thus doing on a large scale what the maid does on a small. "He is ready to marry me as a maid, but whether he would do so as a hand-rammer is at the least doubtful, and I do not choose to be rebaptized."

"And I," said the elder, "would sooner have my two arms chopped off!"

The wheelbarrow was of a different opinion ; he had a right to speak, for he considered himself a quarter of a carriage, because he went about on one wheel. "I must call your attention," he said, "to the fact that 'maid' is rather common ; it is not nearly so select as 'hand-rammer,' or even as 'stamper,' which has also been proposed. Now 'stamper' will raise you at once to the rank of seal—and only think of the great seal of royalty which gives a law all its force!—in your place I would certainly give up 'maid.'"

"Never—never!" cried the elder. "I am too old to change."

"You have perhaps never heard of what is called the European necessity," interposed the worthy wood-measure. "One must learn to yield one's private inclinations to the

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exigencies of the times ; and if the law has been passed that maids are to be called hand-rammers, why, hand-rammers they must be, and it is of no use pouting. Everything has its measure."

"Never! If I must change, I would rather



be called Miss—that is a little like maid, at any rate."

"But *I* would rather be chopped to pieces," said the elder.

At last the workmen came up ; the maids were driven to work in the wheelbarrow ; that was humane treatment, but they were called

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hand-rammers all the same. "Ma—!" they gasped, as they were stamped on the pavement. "Ma—!" they very nearly got the whole word out that time, but not quite, and they thought it beneath their dignity to appeal.

But they always called each other "maid," and spoke of the good old times when things were called by their right names, and if one was a maid one was addressed as maid; and maids they remained, for the rammer-log went back from his engagement as had been anticipated. He had set his heart on a maid.



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